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What is the Organization's Role in Successfully Transitioning New Leaders Hired From the Outside

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the Opus College of Business,
Organization Development and Change, University of St. Thomas

By May Thao-Schuck

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

September 2021

What is the Organization's Role in Successfully Transitioning New Leaders Hired From the
Outside

By
May Thao-Schuck

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality.
We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions
required by the final examining committee have been made.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am incredibly grateful and blessed for you, Mitch. You are my rock, soul mate, best friend, and it is because of your love, support, and continuous encouragement that I am here. I love you so much and am truly honored to have you in my life. I could not have done this without you by my side and paving the way for me. Thank you for being my biggest champion and helping me to achieve my dreams.

You are my world, Hnub Tshiab, and Anton. You energize and give me hope for a brighter future. I love you and am very proud of you. You are a gift to this world, and I cannot wait to see all of the incredible things you will each achieve in your lives. It is my greatest honor to be your mom.

May, Bo, La, and Nou, thank you for always believing in me and for being my biggest cheerleaders. You are the best siblings ever, and your support has meant so much to me. I love you and am grateful for each of you. Thank you for helping with the kids while I had classes or needed to do my school work. Like mom said, “family will always be there for you,” which each of you has done for me.

I love you and miss you so much, mom and dad. While you are not here, I know you are with me. I am incredibly fortunate to have been your daughter and know you have given so much to our family. Your love for family, people, and community, and your bravery, generosity, and support, has meant the world to me.

Sue, I am thankful for you. I am genuinely appreciative of your support, and am blessed to have you in my life.

Thank you, Dr. David Jamieson, for the continuous support and encouragement throughout my journey. I have learned so much from you and appreciated the great conversations we had about organization development topics and its critical role in our work environments.

ABSTRACT

Individuals make several career transitions within their working lifetime, including transitioning into leadership roles. Citrin and Neff (2005) report that individuals with only ten years of employment experience have worked for at least four organizations, with another six projected in their lifetime.

The purpose of this study was to explore, document, and analyze the organization's role in a leadership transition process for individuals that are hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. This study examined participants' transition experiences and how their organizations facilitated the transition process, including the players involved and their roles.

Grounded theory was selected for this qualitative study to understand an organization's role in a new leader's transition process. This study conducted interviews with new leader participants that were hired from the outside into senior leadership positions at a director level or higher and one of their colleagues involved in the transition process. The interview transcriptions, memos, and journaling were used to develop emerging themes. The study's findings were used to suggest how organizations can better support new leaders that are hired from the outside.

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Chapter One

Introduction

After receiving an undergraduate degree in 1998, I have worked in five industries and transitioned into thirteen leadership positions in numerous organizations. While this rate of career change appears unique, it is not. Individuals change careers 10-12 times throughout their working lifetime (Sauer, 2011). In 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that the average employee tenure is 4.2 years, down from 4.6 years in January 2014. BLS showed that individuals born between 1957 and 1964 held an average of 11.7 jobs from ages 18-48, and age impacts the number of jobs occupied in any period with an average of 5.5 jobs from ages 18-24, 2.1 to 2.4 jobs between 25 to 29, 30 to 34 and 35-39. Workers age 40-48 held an average of 2.4 jobs (Bls.gov, 2016). Furthermore, Weise (2021) commented that "in a 100-year work life, we may find ourselves in a state of continuous pivots- 20 to 30 job transitions might become the new normal. Ongoing skill development will become a way of life."

Citrin and Neff (2005) stated that individuals with only ten years of employment experience have worked for at least four organizations with another six projected in their lifetime. "A fast-track manager will switch jobs every two and a half to three years, not counting other significant career transitions, such as heading up important projects or taking on additional functional responsibility," according to the authors (p.7-8). Individuals are not staying with the same company with weak company loyalty, and rather than staying and working through issues, individuals are leaving, revealed Gilmore (1988). The author proclaimed that leadership transitions are so built into the political systems that leaders become disengaged from the real work that occurs (p.12). In addition, Paese and Wellins (2006) reported an increasing number of less-experienced leaders are taking on roles of greater responsibilities due to the

global shortage of leadership supply. The authors alleged that the acceleration rate has increased in the last two decades at a much faster rate than before. Sauer (2011) likewise indicated that the number of new leaders taking over existing teams increased over the last 20 years.

Elsner and Farrands (2006) define leadership "transition" as the process of taking charge in a new role (p.4). While Ardichvili and Manderscheid (2008) define "leadership transition" as the process in which an individual move into a different leadership position and defines the "transition period" as the first nine months. Leadership transition is the process of maintaining strategic, operational, and cultural continuity as one leader passes the mantle of authority to a successor, according to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015). The authors claimed leadership transitions could include, planned leadership transitions, unplanned leadership transitions, transitions in which individuals are promoted and hired from inside the organization, and individuals hired from outside the organization (p.6). Bridges (2009) maintains these changes are situational: where the move to the new site, new boss, and the reorganization of the roles on the team and transition is psychological-"it is a three-phase process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details on the new situation that the change brings about"(p.3).

"A quarter of all the leaders in typical Fortune 500 companies change jobs each year," according to Watkins (2013). The author said that the rate of transitions for executive-level leaderships are even higher. In one study, Watkins reported the rate was 35% for the top three tiers of leadership, 22% for individuals moving internally, and 13% for individuals hired from the outside (p.240). An "Outsider" is an individual who has not had any direct experience with the organization (Santora & Sarros, 2001). Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) emphasized that "The success rate for new leaders is not getting better, and organizations that hired or promoted them have not done their part to ensure success." In addition to that, researchers announced that nearly half of the individuals who transition into new leadership

positions fail or leave within 18 months, and the percentage increases to 55% for individuals hired from the outside (Amerson, 2005; Bebb, 2009; Wentworth, 2010; Karaevli, 2007).

Statement of Problem

The general problem is almost half of the individuals who transition into a leadership position fail or leave within 18-months, and over 50 percent for individuals hired from the outside (Amerson, 2005; Bebb, 2009; Wentworth, 2010; Karaevli, 2007; Ciampa and Dotlich, 2015; Riddle, 2016). Moreover, Dutton (2010) described the rate of turnover as a "revolving-door" (p.42). The difficulty with this high turnover rate and failure for new leaders is the lack of research available to understand an organization's role in a new leader's transition process. The existing research on leadership transition mainly centers on the personal aspect of the transition process for individual leaders but does not from an organizational standpoint.

According to Gilmore (1988), the existing research provides individual leaders with transition strategies to motivate, direct, and change an organization. Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) also argue the existing research focuses on guidance for new leaders rather than the organizations they join (p.2). They proclaimed that research is needed for organizations to help new leaders to have the best chance for success. What is more, researchers agree that the process of taking charge is considered one of the least understood activities in management, and successfully transferring power entails many implicit obstacles (Watkins, 2003; Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). According to Michael Burroughs (2011), "Given the stakes, it is surprising how little good guidance is available to new leaders about how to transition more effectively and efficiently into new roles" (p.3).

O'Keeffe (2012) proclaimed that organizations approach new leaders by hiring them, and providing them with some orientation, but leave them to either sink or swim afterward. The author states that organizations do not have structured plans beyond the basic orientation and lack the needed

resources to support new leaders. Moreover, new leaders are expected to hit the ground running and make positive changes quickly (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins; 2013, Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) declared a company's missteps are the significant contributing factor to the high failure rate of executives at the top. Companies lack a working model of support, feedback, openness, and continuous improvement necessary for those new in a top position to succeed (p. XV). Too little attention had been paid to leadership succession issues, according to Gilmore (1988). Leadership transitions happen for many reasons with the rapid changes and demands of organizations to drive cost management and efficiency, policies, regulatory regimes, restructured work arrangements, new technologies, and shifting public demands along with other external factors (Gilmore, 1988; Manderscheid, 2006; Fenwick, 2013). The turnover rate amongst top management and transitions from one leadership role to another is more frequent than in the past, and no one is expected to be in one career with one company any longer (Gilmore, 1988; Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2008). Gilmore (1988) stated that new leaders are moving on before they can even set new directions. According to the Booz Allen Hamilton study (2006), Chief Executive Officers (CEO) are leaving in droves and managing CEO succession is troubling. The study referred to CEOs as "The World's Most Prominent Temp Workers" (Lucier et al., 2006). In 2003, the CEOs' annual turnover rate was 9.8 percent; a year later, the rate jumped to 14.2 percent. The turnover rate for CEOs in 2006 increased over 300 percent within one decade. Liberum (as cited in Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2008) noted that CEOs are not only leaving, but turnover among top management has been occurring at a fast pace since mid-2005. Ciampa & Dotlich (2015) stated that 15.3 percent of CEOs left the 2,500 largest global public companies in 2005, and 70 percent just a decade later (p.3).

Douglas Riddle (2016) reported in the Center for Creative Leadership article that 40 percent of newly appointed CEOs failed within the first 18 months, but the failure rate dropped to 34 percent if the

CEO is hired from inside (i.e., a person selected from within the firm). For individuals hired from the outside (i.e., a person selected who was not in the employ of the firm), the percentage of failure jumped to 55 percent, according to Karaevli (2007). In 2008, Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) reported that 46 percent of CEOs were forced to leave their position, and the 40 percent rate of failure that occurs in the first 18 months for executives has "stood still" for at least 15 years. The authors stated that while some failures can be due to individuals' readiness for top jobs, the bottom line is that organizations need to do their part in the transition process for new leaders to succeed.

When new leaders are not successful, the cost of failure can be high and up to 24 times the base compensation for new leaders (Levin, 2010). The cost associated with leadership failure exceeds the \$14 billion spent on leadership development annually (Gurdijian, Habeisen, and Thomas, 2014). Linda Hill (2007) declares, "organizations suffer considerable human and financial costs when a person who has been promoted because of strong individual performance and qualifications fails to adjust successfully to management." According to Marks and Mirvis (2000), the failure rate needs to be addressed, with a substantial loss of time and financial resources for organizations.

Existing researchers agree that transitioning into new leadership positions is one of the most challenging times in a leader's working career with high-levels of uncertainty (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988; Watkins, 2003, Citrin & Neff, 2005). For leaders, transitions are incredibly overwhelming and stressful with many moving parts, and the transition period can be a time where individuals sink or swim. Organizations expect new leaders to bring change rapidly during the transition period (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2013).

When a leader fails during a transition, it can harm careers, reputations, confidence, and significantly impact the people left behind (Citrin & Neff, 2005). Leadership failures cost millions in lost revenue and can damage an organization's reputation from customers regarding their ability to

sustain products, quality, and retain its people (Watkins, 2003). Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) stated that while it is easy to blame failure on a new leader's lack of skills and competencies, leadership transition is complicated and messy, which requires full commitment and investment in the new leader by organizations.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study's general purpose is to examine an organization's role in a leadership transition process for new leaders hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. The goal is to explore, document, analyze, and describe who plays a role in the transition process to successfully transition new leaders and the individuals' impact on the new leader. In addition, the aim is to gain insights into organizations' processes, facilitating the transition process for new leaders hired from the outside. These include exploring what working systems, behaviors, and operating systems are placed to support new leaders during the transition process.

The findings from this study can add to the current literature on leadership transitions and provide more insights for organizations to better support new leaders hired from the outside for successful transitions. The data could also encourage more investments from organizations for funding, resources, and energies to understanding its role and impact on new leaders' overall transition experience.

This study's findings could also contribute to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) work on "planned leadership transitions" and how organizations facilitate the leadership transition process to reduce the percentage of new leaders who fail or depart during the first 18 months. The authors centered on "planned transitions" for Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and the key players' role within the organization to assist the new CEO, specifically the board, the CEO, the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHROs), and senior managers' roles. Their framework proposes that organizations understand

the root causes of failure with the complexity of transition where the new leader and key players both make adjustments during transitions. Organizations also need to be aware of thinking errors that cause failures at the top, such as "People join companies all the time, it's nothing to get all excited about," or "Our job is done when the one we want says "yes," or "We know what he can do" according to the authors. These thinking errors lead to destruction for the new leader. Organizations need to avoid common execution errors made by its key players in the transition process and clarify specific roles in the organization to ensure success for the new leader. Companies need to determine success factors that need to be in place to secure successful planned transitions for CEOs. Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) emphasized that "leadership transition is not a simple transaction, but a process with many moving parts through a string of interdependent steps." They state that not only does a new leader need to make adjustment, but each of the major players inside the organization must also adjust.

Research Question

The current research shows that nearly half of the individuals that transition into new senior leadership positions fail or leave within 18 months, and over 50 percent for individuals hired from the outside (Amerson, 2005; Bebb, 2009; Wentworth, 2010; Karaevli, 2007; Ciampa and Dotlich, 2015; Riddle, 2016). The rate has been known in the leadership field for years and has stood still, according to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015). While there is existing research that focuses on leadership transitions, most studies focus on the individual's role and what the person should do and avoid for making a successful transition rather than the role of an organization.

While there is no best way to implement a leadership transition process for every business situation, the high rate of new leaders failing or leaving within 18-months needs to be addressed (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). According to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015), "Transitions are big deals, and when they go wrong, it is a setback for everyone involved." For that reason, this study will explore the

question, "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

Significance of the Study

This qualitative study aims to explore, document, analyze, and describe the lived experiences of participants hired from the outside into senior leadership positions about their transition experience. This study explores how organizations facilitate the transition process for new leaders and the players involved, including each player's role in the transition process. The study will also examine activities, things, or systems in place to support the study participants and what they deemed as helpful or not regarding how their organization facilitated the transition process. This study will review how those things impact the participant during the transition process.

Although many leadership levels exist in organizations, due to the scope and scale of this study, senior leaders are studied due to the complexity, knowledge, skills, and experience required for their roles, which differs from first-time managers or Chief Executive Officers. Additionally, with the changing business environments and demographics, less experienced individuals are transitioning into leadership roles that require higher skills (Paese & Wellins, 2006). Watkins (2003) proclaimed that 25% of managers transition into new jobs in fortune 500 companies annually, and the percentage of new leaders taking over existing teams has increased (Sauer, 2001).

Definitions

Several definitions of leadership transition exist, but there is no agreed-upon definition by researchers. Gabarro (1987) states the transition process starts when the new leader begins a new assignment, and the process ends when the new leader masters their assignment, resources, constraints, and the new leader's own ability efficiently (p. 6). The author defines the process of taking charge as

"how managers learn about their new assignments, act on that learning, and do the organizational and interpersonal work necessary to take charge of their organizations and taking charge refers to "The process by which a manager establishes mastery and influence in a new assignment" (p.2).

Gilmore (1988) defines a leader as "the strategic aspects of managing: setting direction, infusing the organization with purpose, choosing priorities, and defending the integrity of the unit. Even for transitions in units of the organization, it is useful to think of these changes as leadership transition rather than as managerial succession" (p.XIII). Leadership transition includes "all the stages from an organization's perception of the need for new leadership through the arrival and successful joining of a new leader" (p.XI).

Ciampa and Watkins (1999) define the transition period as "the onset of recruiting to the end of the first six months on the job (p.4). Watkins (2003) says a new leader's transition "begins the moment you learn you are being considered for a new job," and the ending varies for new leaders depending on the situation they face (p.13). Transition is "Taking charge in a new role, the time referred to as transitions is to enter a time filled with personal potential," according to Elsner and Farrands (2006). According to Manderscheid and Ardichvili (2008), the "transition period," for new leaders and their team can be anywhere between one to nine months.

The definitions below were used in this study.

Leader: the strategic aspects of managing: setting direction, infusing the organization with purpose, choosing priorities, and defending the integrity of the unit. Even for transitions in units of the organization, it is useful to think of these changes as leadership transition rather than as managerial succession" (Gilmore, 1888).

Leadership: "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2016).

Inside Hire: "Insider" is classified as an individual who is currently employed by the organization and is promoted into leadership position. (Santora and Sarro, 2001).

Outside Hire: "Outsider" is an individual who has not had any direct experience with the organization (Santora and Sarro, 2001).

Leadership Transition: Leadership transition includes "all the stages from an organization's perception of the need for new leadership through the arrival and successful joining of a new leader" (Gilmore, 1988).

Transition period: Ciampa and Watkins (1999) defines the transition period as "the onset of recruiting to the end of the first six months on the job (p.4). Manderscheid and Ardichvili (2008) for new leaders and their team is anywhere between one to nine months.

Taking charge: Taking charge is "How managers learn about their new assignments, act on that learning, and do the organizational and interpersonal work necessary to take charge of their organizations. It is the process by which a manager establishes mastery and influence in a new assignment (Gabarro, 1987)

Transition: Transition is "Taking charge in a new role, the time referred to as transitions is to enter a time filled with personal potential" according to (Elsner & Farrands, 2006).

Limitations

This study was conducted as a qualitative, grounded theory design. Marshall and Rossman (1999) claimed that "generalization of qualitative findings to other populations, settings, and treatment arrangements-that is, its external validity-is seen by traditional canons as a weakness in the approach" (p.193). The researcher took care to describe the research setting, population, and theoretical framework to strengthen the study's validity. Researchers who choose to conduct future studies within similar

parameters can determine whether the findings described can be generalized for new research and transferred to other settings.

Due to the scope and a smaller number of participants utilized in this study, the findings cannot be generalizing to all leadership transition experiences or situations. This study's sample size is not significant enough to declare what is learned can be applied to every leadership transition situation and cannot be generalized for all organizations in the way they facilitate the transition process for new leaders hired from the outside. However, the data collected can provide additional insights into an organization's role in a leadership transition process and how organizations can effectively support new leaders from the outside to have the best chance for success.

Chapter Summary

Individuals will make several career transitions in their working lifetime. Researchers show that the number of leaders in transition is increasing and will continue. However, once hired, new leaders are expected to hit the ground running to make immediate changes positively without appropriate support systems (Sauer, 2011; Watkins, 2013). Moreover, the rate of failure for senior leaders that are hired from the outside is much higher than insiders (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Karaevli, 2007; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015; Riddle, 2016). This failure is costly and can significantly impact a new leader's career and devastate the people left behind in the organization. The failure rate for leaders in transitions has been well known and has been the same for years in the leadership field (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015).

Even though the leadership transition process has been well documented from the new leaders' perspective, the problem is the lack of research available to concede an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired from the outside to transition into their roles successfully. It is not clear from existing studies the company's role in the transition process, who is involved in the process, or what support is provided for new leaders in making successful transitions.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The general problem is that a high rate of individuals that transition into senior leadership positions fail or leave within 18 months and that number is higher for individuals hired from the outside (Amerson, 2005; Bebb, 2009; Wentworth, 2010; Karaevli, 2007; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015; Riddle, 2016). Transitioning from the outside is extremely challenging into a new leadership position, and the 18-months rule has been known in the field of leadership for nearly two decades (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015; Watkins, 2013). Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) proclaimed, “leadership transitions are complex, seminal events that herald a new era in the life of a company, and too many of them fail” (p.XIV). However, every business situation is different, and there is not a single best way to manage the transition process for every leader according to Ciampa and Watkins (1999).

The topics of change management, succession planning, and leadership transition are available through existing research, but little is known about the combined effort between organizations and the new leader to ensure successful transitions (Gabbro, 1987; Ciampa and Watkins, 2013). A scarcity of research is available to understand an organization’s role in a new leader’s transition process. As a result, this chapter offers literature reviews relevant to this study in terms of how organizations conduct leadership transitions, the impact of leadership transitions for individuals and their organizations, supports that are provided to new leaders during transitions, strategies new leaders can use for successful transitions, and common traps to avoid during transitions for new leaders.

Scope of Review

The literature from 1980 to 2018 was reviewed and pulled from different databases in EBSCOhost, ERIC, Proquest Dissertation and Thesis, and SAGE. In addition, numerous published books related to leadership transitions were examined for this study. The keywords used to search the topic included leadership transition, executive transition, new leader entry, executive integration, leadership socialization, and leadership assimilation. These lead to a large number of scholarly literatures reviewed for this study.

From the research conducted for this study, the existing pieces of literature focused heavily on new leaders' experience and what strategies are needed to deploy for successful transitions into new leadership roles. However, limited information was available to review an organization's standpoint during a leadership transition process to explore its role in helping a new leader to succeed. The most relevant study related to an organization's role in a leadership transition process appeared from Ciampa and Dotlich's work in their book, *Transition From The Top*, published in 2015. The authors focused on planned transitions for Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and defined a planned transition as "Where he is hired into a high-level position (for example, as a chief operating officer or division president) and move up by way of a predetermined, managed process" (p.7). The authors focused on key players inside the company and what role the company must play to support a new CEO to make a successful transition. The company was defined as "the major players who most determined its strategy, how it operates day-to-day, who is hired and who stays, how its various parts are expected to coordinate, and its culture" (p.6).

According to Ciampa & Dotlich (2015), a leader's transition is not merely a transaction but a complicated process with many interdependencies. Bridges (2009) proclaimed that change is situational, but the transition is psychological. The author reported that individuals go through a three phrases process internalizing and coming to terms with the details of the new situation. According to Bridges (2009), the transition is a process, starting with the ending phrase where an individual lets go of their old realities and prepare for the new situation. The neutral zone is a time when a high level of uncertainty, anxiety, and isolation exists as the person substitutes old behaviors, while the beginning stage is a new beginning.

How Leadership Transitions Are Managed

Nearly 25% of managers in fortune 500 companies change jobs annually, according to Watkins (2013), yet there is not a best way to handle transitions for every new leader with the different business situations (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). Leadership is complex, and transitions are full of struggles, chaos, and challenges for new leaders (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). In the field of management, the process of taking charge is not well understood with the numerous implicit obstacles of transitioning power (Gabarro,1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2013).

Organizations do not pay attention or invest in the transition process for leaders (Gilmore, 1988; Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2013; Elsner & Farrands, 2006; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). According to Brady and Helmich (1984), "Given the rather significant impact of leadership transition on a firm, it is surprising that so little research attention has been spent in the area since succession is a traumatic event for organization." Watkins (2013) proclaimed, "Companies often have a patchwork quilt of existing systems for supporting transitions" (p.244). Organizations do not examine the requirements of leadership jobs or think through the challenges new leaders will encounter in making transitions. Boards and other appointing authorities are also not prepared to manage transitions,

according to Gilmore (1988). Many appointing authorities disengage from the transition process once the hiring process is complete (Gilmore, 1988). According to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015), little else is done by the organization once a new leader is hired, leaving new leaders on their own and unprepared (p.2).

Organizations lack formal structures and inventions to help new leaders establish a relationship with their new teams during transitions (Gabarro, 1987; Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2009). Often, new leaders are left on their own while they are expected to acclimate and bring positive changes quickly (Watkins, 2003). Supervisors are not typically available, and some are uninterested in supporting new leaders during the transition period (Elsner & Farrands, 2006). Gilmore (1988) proclaimed that 79% of presidential appointees are thrown into their jobs after being hired without any guidance, and some never receive orientations.

The Impact of Leadership Transitions

Transitioning into a new job is one of the most challenging times in a new leader's career, and the process of taking charge takes time and effort (Gilmore, 1988; Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999, Watkins 2003). It takes at least two to three years for successful transitions through the various stages (Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). The transition process is rarely completed in one year, according to Elsner & Farrands (2006). Farquhar (1995) stated that the transition process is never finished.

Transitions are stressful as new leaders search for mastery and personal coherence (Bear, Benson-Armer, & McLaughlin, 2000; Gabarro, 1987, Gilmore, 1988, Ciampa & Watkins, 1999, Levin, 2010; Watkins, 2013, Elsner & Farrands, 2006, Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). New leaders are in a state of incompetence doing the most during the time of transition when they know the least, during transitions, according to Citrin & Neff (2005). New leaders also face a high level of psychological tensions

(anxieties), leading to loneliness and isolation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). There is confusion or indecisiveness when the new leaders should be exhibiting confidence (Elsner & Farrands, 2006). "It feels like you have no knowledge base whatsoever about anything" while you are trying to learn and run the business, according to Gabarro (1987).

During transitions, leaders encounter high scrutiny from internal and external stakeholder groups where opinions of them are formed quickly (Watkins, 2013). Nevertheless, leaders are expected to make critical decisions and take action quickly (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Elsner & Farrands, 2006; Levin, 2010; Watkins, 2010; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Leaders experience vulnerability without the necessary knowledge and relationships during transitions (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). Weaknesses are magnified with decreased confidence for leaders during the transition period. They are expected to "hit the ground running" with only a short "honeymoon" period (Watkins, 2013). Gilmore (1988) described the honeymoon period as the time the interested groups or organization grants the new leader an opportunity to resolve significant issues, and the new leader is given the benefit of the doubt.

For organizations, the impact of leadership transitions is significant. A leader's transition can be positive in communicating an organization's future strategy or negative if the tenure is short without the new leader completing changes (Gilmore, 1988). According to Gilmore, "Leadership transitions represent a natural entry point for change" and signifies a crucial moment for organizations. The transition of a leader provides an organization with the opportunity to reimagine their current agenda and future" (p.10). A leadership transition is a "pivotal period" for an organization in reshaping its future and is "an era of change" that can alter the company's performance and culture permanently (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). Leadership transitions can be disruptive, with decreased performances and destabilization for organizations (Gilmore, 1988; Bear, Benson-Armer, 2000; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015).

For the people inside, time freezes with high-levels of anxiety, adapting to the new leader and high anticipation about the future direction (Elsner & Farrands, 2006; Citrin & Neff, 2005). The authors claim that the risk heightens with assumptions about the unknown in the first 100 days for people, even though change is expected with the new leader. Watkins (2013) contends that "major changes can create a ripple of individual transitions that cascades throughout the organization" (p. 241).

Elsner and Farrands (2006) stressed that some leadership transitions are harder than others. The authors asserted approximately one-third of all appointments for new leaders end up in disappointment. Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) reported that leadership failures could set everyone back, especially when organizations miss their part in the transition process. On top of all of this, it cost thousands of dollars when a new leader fails, according to Watkins (2013). Failures are detrimental, causing career derailment for new leaders, creating misguided directions for the organization, creating a loss of stability and predictability in a company's operations, and damaging relationships and coalitions (Watkins, 2013; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). For CEOs, failures can run companies up to 12 million and 10-20 times the executive's yearly compensation (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015).

Gilmore (1988) declared that the more significant the shift is in an organization's strategy, the more likely for them to hire from the outside (p.52). Ciampa and Watkins (1999) argued that new leaders are hired from the outside when changes are needed quickly, and no one on the inside can do the job (p.17). Outsiders face a higher risk of failure due to the lack of knowledge about the organization, including its structure, systems, policies, and cultures, while many go through a personal transition as well. Citrin and Neff (2005) claimed that anyone coming from the outside has to do the most when they know the least (p.14). The authors stressed that new leaders encounter different opportunities and challenges where outsiders are expected to bring change while insiders are given less permission to shake things up.

Supporting Leaders in Transition

For the best chance for new leaders to successfully make the transition, organizations must do to its part by paying careful attention to the overall leadership transition process details according to researchers (Watkins, 2013; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Before a new leader is hired, organizations need to evaluate the needed capabilities, skills, and abilities before the hiring begins and then again during the transition period. A new leader's charters must be explicit and transparent with clear priorities (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Citrin & Neff, 2005; Elsner & Farrands, 2006; Watkins, 2013; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Organizations must identify and do as much as they can to anticipate the problems new leaders are likely to face during transitions and remove them as much as possible. Gabarro (1987) stated that appropriate levels of resources and support should be provided to new leaders by organizations. In some cases, the author claims that external support and resources may be appropriate to accelerate learning for the new leader. Watkins (2013) proclaimed that supports provided should match the leader's level, such as transition coach versus cohort sessions versus virtual works and self-guided materials (p.251).

A supervisor's involvement is an essential part of a new leader's transition process. Supervisors should be accessible, communicate clearly about expectations and priorities, and provide consistent feedback throughout the transition process (Gilmore, 1988; Manderscheid, 2008). According to Manzoni & Barsoux (2002), leaders do not fail on their own and claim, "Some employees are not up to their assigned tasks, and never will be, owing to lack of knowledge, skills, or simple desire. But sometimes we go so far as to say often-an employee's poor performance can be blamed largely on his or her boss" (p.1).

Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) claimed that "leadership transition is not a simple transaction but rather a process that has many moving parts that exit through a string of interdependent steps" (p.7).

The authors state that each major player inside the organization needs to adjust with transitions, not only the new leader (p.8). They argue companies' thinking errors are fatal when it comes to leadership transition if the complexity they face in a top-level transition is ignored or their practices reinforce the three key myths of transitions "People join companies all the time, it is nothing to get all excited about," "Our job is done when the one we want says yes," and "We know what he can do" (p.9).

Internal staff needs to be a part of the transition planning and preparing briefing books and other helpful materials for new leaders, according to Gilmore (1988). To accelerate the transition process, Watkins (2013) claim organizations should identify their critical transitions, determine the number of people being hired and frequency of transitions, understand the transition frequencies and mix of onboarding, inboarding (moves between units), promotions and lateral moves to tailor support appropriately for new leaders (p.243). Companies need to have standards for getting ready for their new leaders and guidelines to increase their success (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Supports should match the new leader's level, according to Watkins (2013).

Without proper support for new leaders making a transition, organizations can inadvertently set them up to fail, according to Watkins (2013). Organizations set new leaders up to fail when their expectations and mandates are not clear, and when their hiring processes are not thoroughly evaluated based on their business situation. Failure also increases for new leaders when organizations do not spend the needed time identifying potential problems and solutions that affect a new leader's chances of success during the transition period. New leaders are set-up to fail when they have too much to deal with during the transition period (Watkins, 2013; p.245). Moreover, Watkins (2013) declares that individuals promoted internally can fail when organizations do not evaluate their ability, have a good understanding of the capabilities needed to succeed in the new position, absence training for the new leaders, and have them perform two jobs at the same time (p.245).

To adequately manage the transition process and accelerate learning for new leaders, Watkins (2013) proclaimed the transition process must be treated similarly to any other business processes by implementing the right framework, tools, and systems to accelerate everyone (p. 242). The author reinforced that forming a unified framework with languages and a toolkit for talking and planning transitions is quintessential to speed up new leaders (p.246-247). The following questions below are suggestions for organizations to assess their existing systems (p.246):

- "Identify and assess the status of your company's existing acceleration support frameworks and tools. What approaches have been used, and why? To what degree do they represent best practices?"
- "Examine the approaches (coaching programs, virtual workshops, self-guided materials) your organization currently uses to deliver transition support at all levels of the leadership pipeline. Evaluated the associated costs and benefits."
- "Assess the overall coherence of your organization's approach to supporting different types of transitions-onboarding, promotion, and lateral and international moves. Is there a common core model for accelerating all transitions?"
- "Identify the key stakeholders (bosses, peers, direct reports, HR generalists, learning and development personnel) who do or could provide support during transitions."
- "Assess the adequacy of your company's HR information systems (for example, websites) indirectly supporting transitions and in providing the data about where and when transitions are occurring, so that you can provide support on a just-in-time basis."

Besides, Watkins (2013) insisted that organizations need to match the right support with the transition type properly. The author states promotions entail a predictable set of challenges and "So focused sets of resources should be provided that help newly promoted leaders understand what success looks like at

the new level, assess themselves, and create a personal development plan" (p.250). Onboarding, on the other hand, requires challenges of aligning expectations, adapting to new cultures, and building the right sorts of relationships. Consequently, support requires that new leaders have clear expectations and connections to the right stakeholders (p.251). Ideally, the author revealed that regardless of transitions, a transition coach, self-assessment for the new leader, assistance with risk factors in the new organization, and assistance with the teams are necessary for new leaders (p.251).

Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) also constructed a framework to guide organizations' key players in managing planned transitions for Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), including the board, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO), and the senior managers. The authors defined a planned transition as "where he is hired into a high-level position and moves up by way of a predetermined, managed process (p.7). The role of Boards is to be accountable for the overall success of the transition and genuinely partner with the existing CEO to help the new leader succeed in making the transition (p.11). The role for the current CEO, according to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015) is to "direct the design and implementation of the transition's various steps, and to ensure that the CEO's successor assimilates effectively into the organization and, ultimately, moves up to the top position" (p.13). The role of the Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO) is to monitor the transition process according to its plan and be responsible for the CEO's assimilation into the organization. The CHRO needs to establish how communications go out to the rest of the organization and must be the "internal advisor" and sounding board for the new CEO on critical issues such as the political system, the structure of relationships, coalitions, and alliances that directly impact the transition. Furthermore, a CHRO needs to be the confidant and connector of the major players within the organization to assist the new CEOs (p.15-16). The role of Senior Managers is to "prepare the organization for the handoff and to make sure both they and their functions or departments adapt to the new leadership style and, possibly, to new

strategic and operational priorities" (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). They need to provide the right communications to their teams or functions and keep the day to day operations running to ensure their areas can adapt effectively to the new CEO (p.17).

Strategies for Successful Transitions

Gilmore (1988) proclaimed, "If our institutions are to survive, there will need to be much more attention to the damage that can result from failed transitions, both to people and to organizations" (p.254). He argues that in reality, people do get hurt during transitions, careers derail, people are fired, reputations are tarnished, and influence is substantially reduced. The author stressed that the task for new leaders is to join the organization and create the capacity to lead it, not to ensure no one is hurt (p.212). Gilmore alleged that new leaders must significantly increase their overall capacity for "managing change and ambiguity" and stay focused on the organization's mission and critical success factors during transitions.

Watkins (2013) argued that a new leader's goal is to reach the break-even point as quickly as possible, and the leader cannot assume what made them successful previously will make them successful in the new role. A new leader's task during the transition is to become a part of the organization of which he is the leader (Elsner & Farrands, 2006). Gabarro (1987) asserted that leadership is complicated and challenging. There is no single best way to transition every leader within the various business situations (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). To have the best chance for successful transitions, researchers agree that new leaders can deploy several strategies to make successful transitions:

Prepare and learn. One of the most critical tasks for a new leader during a leadership transition is to prepare and make plans for learning. A new leader must use and take advantage of their time before starting in the new job or "countdown period" wisely (Citrin & Neff, 2005). According to the

authors, a new leader should learn as much as possible and determine the best way to navigate the new environment to get off on the right foot. Before starting in the new role, a leader should identify the organization's challenges, look for ways to establish credibility and trust, absorb necessary information to prepare emotionally, and conduct a self-assessment of her abilities related to the new role (p.21).

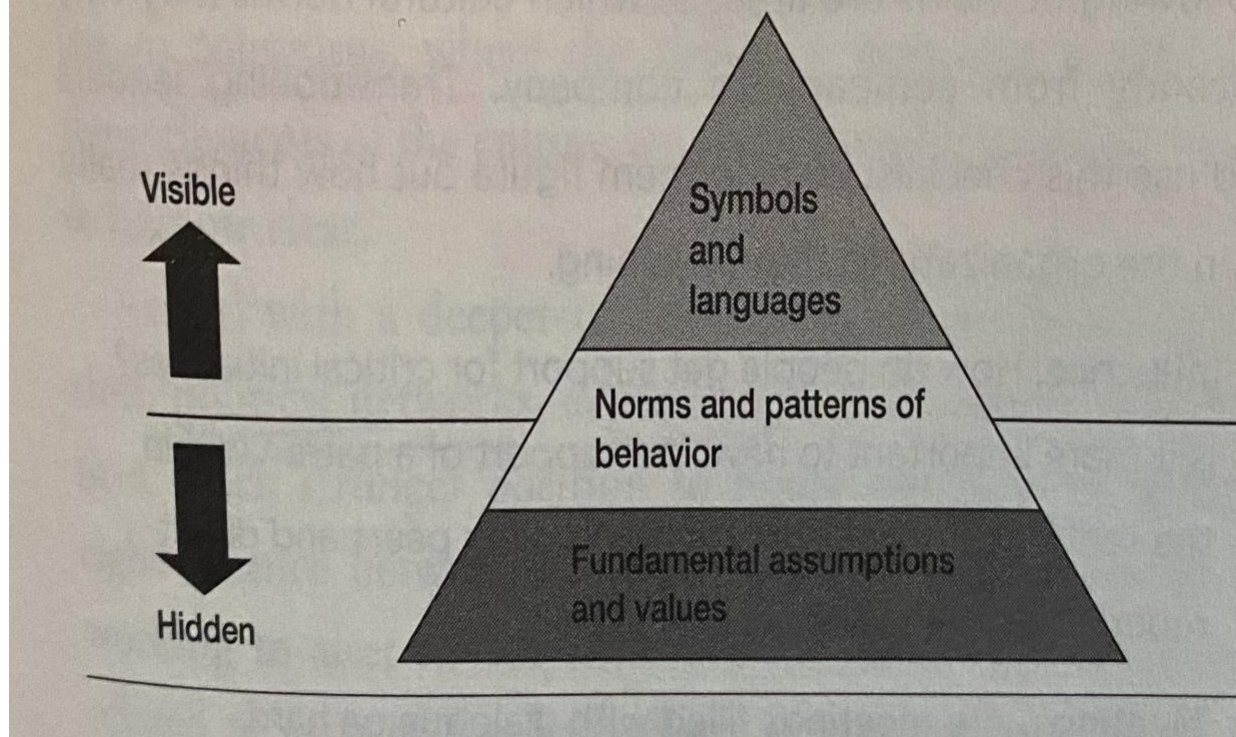
A new leader must climb the learning curve quickly, according to Ciampa and Watkins (1999). Preparing for the transition should start for a new leader, the minute a phone call is received (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). Preparation and learning help minimize distractions, especially if a leader has to perform two jobs simultaneously. Preparation also helps when a leader has to handle a personal transition, such as relocation or taking care of the family. Watkins (2003) proclaimed the “fuzzy-front end” or time upfront should be used to understand the company, and on arrival, understand the organization's priorities for a new leader (p. 29). A leader needs an understanding of the strategy, structure, performance, and people, according to the author (p.50). Preparation means letting go of the past and embracing the new situation as quickly as possible during transitions for a new leader (Watkins, 2013; p.20); Gabarro, 1987). Coming into a new situation as a know-it-all or savior is one of the worst mistakes a new leader can make, according to Citrin and Neff (2005). Moreover, a new leader should not take the ability to make changes lightly since inappropriate changes can worsen the organization (Gabarro, 1987).

According to Ciampa and Watkins (1999), a new leader needs to plan for the “first era” to undertake the process of overlapping learning and planning where they leverage the time before entry for planning and learning (p.273-274). A new leader cannot waste a single minute during transitions and should spend the necessary time absorbing, listening, learning, establishing relationships, and making decisions (Citrin and Neff, 2005). The authors state, “Anyone coming into a new situation is faced with the fact that they have to do the most at the point when they know the least.” (p.14).

To expedite a new leader's learning and succeed in joining a new company, Watkins (2013) declared new leaders should focus on the four pillars of effective onboarding: business orientation, stakeholder connection, alignment of expectations, and cultural adaptation. In the business orientation pillar, new leaders need to understand the business environment, learn about the company as a whole, go beyond the financial, products, and strategy, and understand the company's operating model, planning and performance evaluation systems, and talent management system in place (p.28-29). In the stakeholder connection pillar, new leaders need to expeditiously identify and unite with the right people to build productive working relationships. The relationships should not only be with vertical stakeholders but need to include peers and other key constituents as well (p.29). In the alignment of expectations pillar, the new leader needs to have explicit knowledge of their expectations (p. 29-30). In the fourth pillar, culture adaptation, new leaders need to adjust successfully within the new environment. This means new leaders must understand the overall culture and how it manifests in the organization or unit (p.30). According to Watkins (2013), "culture is a set of consistent patterns people follow for communicating, thinking, and acting, all grounded in their shared assumptions and values. The culture in any organization is generally multilayered, as illustrated in figure 1-2."

FIGURE 1-2

The culture pyramid



Self-Management and Build a Support System: A new leader must determine what “leadership presence” means in their new role and understand how to show up in the new organization, according to Watkins (2003). A leader needs to regulate their emotions with the number of demands experienced during transitions. For many, it is a roller coaster of emotions striving to look and model the right leadership presence, while others feel they are drinking from a fire hose during transitions (Elsner & Farrands, 2006; Watkins, 2013). Elsner and Farrands (2006) declared that “A well-tuned self-awareness, a deep and fearless understanding of who you are is one of the best tools for handling the surprises and turbulence of the new situations, people and events you will be meeting” (p. 14).

Furthermore, self-awareness is a key to successful transitions, according to the authors. Self-awareness means, “You have a balanced view of where you are effective and where your shortcomings are. It means you can hear feedback about yourself with interest and engagement without defensiveness in a conversation about yourself with others. You can accept praise for what you do well and know-how and why it is that you do well. You know which of yourself comings you need to compensate for, and you know which ones can realistically be changed” (p.139).

Making a good impression for a new leader is also important for successful transitions, according to Ciampa & Watkins (1999). The authors reported a core task for a new leader is to manage oneself by staying on the “rested edge” and avoiding the “ragged edge.” “New leaders must apply clear-headed judgment, stay focus, and maintain emotional evenness” since impressions carry much weight during the transition process (p.97). A leader should prepare for the emotional impact of transitions and have mechanisms in place to preserve calmness. Ciampa and Watkins (1999) declared that managing oneself is as important as managing the organization since reversing impressions is difficult.

Elsner and Farrands (2006) proclaimed a new leader needs to stand up and stand out during the “surviving phase” of transitions and have “stamina” to keep their beliefs and values clear during transitions. Self-understanding is crucial for a leader since transitions can shift their thinking about who they are and how they operate (p.78). A leader needs to be aware of their bandwidth, considering that the ability to absorb and learn simultaneously can impact transitions (Citrin and Neff, 2005). A leader needs to find diverse ways to handle their stress during transitions, given that their early actions can significantly impact their long-term success, including having the right attitude, according to Citrin and Neff (2005).

Leadership transition is one of the most demanding and challenging times in a new leader’s working life, and for many, it can be lonely (Gilmore, 1988). An existing myth is that new leaders are

supported during transitions, according to Elsner and Farrands (2006). Therefore, the authors reinforced that a new leader needs to build a support system since “Support means different things for different individuals: it could involve talking through what is happening as a way of making sense of it; putting words to turbulent feelings; normalizing new experience; taking breaks to get a fresh perspective. Support involves re-energizing ourselves when we feel exhausted by the demands of new situations, people, and contexts-however we need to do it.” Moreover, a new leader should define the right balance between work and home, find ways to manage and structure home and work hours, and support outside work (p.86).

Establish Relationships and Build Credibility: Researchers acknowledge that the quality of relationships matters for new leaders and depends on their relationship factors with subordinates and superiors to do the learning, diagnosing, making decisions, and taking charge during transitions (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988; Watkins, 2003). On top, a new leader’s management style, interpersonal skills, leadership ability, and conflict management style and ability to tend to the organizations and interpersonal work is also vital during transitions (Gabarro, 1987; p. 68-69). A new leader needs to spend time building relationships and credibility (Citrin and Neff, 2005). If the connection is not made with existing staff, then all the skills and insights in the world would not help a new leader succeed since the staff is the change course (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988).

Poor decision making by a new manager during transitions can drive the loss of credibility and potentially create sour relationships for new leaders (Gabarro, 1987). A new leader needs to connect with existing staff by joining effectively (Gilmore, 1988). The author reported that joining effectively means “Focusing on and working with the positive, healthy parts of the system while confirming the reality of the system, often by empathizing with some painful aspect of it, helping people tell their stories so they feel heard and begin to hope that the leader can help resolve some of the critical

challenges. Acknowledging the existing structure and leadership before beginning to change it and avoiding getting caught permanently in a coalition with one part or another, but rather moving to connect with the different groups and making each feel understood” (p.130).

A new leader needs to reflect and ask the right questions and loop back when data is collected to earn credibility during transitions, according to Citrin and Neff (2005). There needs to be a process for approaching fears and doubts, and a leader should not disrespect predecessors and must counterbalance resentments instead (p.56-58). The authors claim that a company should use the assimilation questions below in the first 100 days with every person for learning about the new situation and system: (p.59)

- What do we expect of this new person?
- What do we want the new leader to know about us?
- What do we do well? Where do we need improvements?
- What do we want to know about the new leader? What are our concerns about him/her?
- What are the burning issues in our department?
- What are the major obstacles the new leader will face?

Citrin and Neff (2005) proclaimed that new leaders could establish credibility by having a solid strategic agenda, staying on top of the details of the business, attending to their boss or board members, communicating early, producing a strong committed management team, and having a certain amount of humility. To create fruitful relationships with higher authorities, the authors provide the following guidelines (p.198-199):

- Understand the stated and unstated motivations of your boss or board. It’s not just about meeting your objectives and building shareholder value, it’s also about making them successful and protecting their reputations.

- If you are a new CEO, initiate an “on-boarding” process with the board similar to what can be done with new managers.
- If you’re not a CEO, meet with your new boss and discuss how he or she really likes to work, establish priorities, and communicate. For example, is he more comfortable with formal written updates or more fluid progress reports? Does she prefer email or voicemail?
- Try to explicitly assess which members of the board or the department are strongest and most experienced-and on which issues; look at which directors are less engaged, and which are truly independent in their thinking.
- Diagnose the culture of the board, and tailor your communication and management style accordingly. Is the board formal and relatively distant or more informal and hands-on? As you increase your credibility with the board, migrate the culture or what you believe is most constructive and what you are most comfortable with.
- If you are a CEO, develop one or more confidants on the board, whether a nonexecutive chairman or a presiding director. Look to them to serve as a sounding board to bounce ideas off of, to help set board agendas, and in the early days even to help manage the board process while you are getting up to speed on the business.
- Establish your credibility by having a sound strategic agenda, being on top of the details of the business, listening and learning from your boss or board members, building a strong and committed management team, establishing a sound management process, and maintaining humility
- Establish an effective communication protocol with your boss or board, including informal communication protocol.
- Establish the discipline of regular feedback with your board or boss.

- Involve the board members in the business so they become more knowledgeable and effective. Create forums for directors to interact with managers, visit customers and facilities, and dive deeply into key businesses. This will increase their ability to help assess and support strategy and perform their most important function, ensuring optimal succession.

Watkins (2013) proclaimed that new leaders could also produce early wins by establishing their personal credibility. Credibility depends on how people answer the following questions about the new leader, according to the author:

- Do you have the insight and steadiness to make tough decisions?
- Do you have values that they relate to, admire, and want to emulate?
- Do you have the right kind of energy?
- Do you demand high levels of performance from yourself and others?

Watkins (2013) proclaimed that a new leader is perceived more credible by the following actions (p. 125-126):

- Demanding but able to be satisfied. Effective leaders get people to make realistic commitments and then hold them responsible for achieving results. But if you're never satisfied, you'll sap people's motivation. Know when to celebrate success and when to push for more.
- Accessible but not too familiar. Being accessible does not mean making yourself available indiscriminately. It means being approachable, but in a way that preserves your authority.
- Decisive but judicious. New leaders communicate their capacity to take charge, perhaps by rapidly making some low-consequence decisions, without jumping too quickly into decisions that they aren't ready to make. Early in your transition, you want to project decisiveness but defer some decisions until you know enough to make the right calls.

- Focused but flexible. Avoid setting up a vicious cycle and alienating others by coming across as rigid and unwilling to consider multiple solutions. Effective new leaders establish authority by zeroing in on issues but consulting others and encouraging input. They also know when to give people the flexibility to achieve results in their own ways.
- Active without causing commotion. There's a fine line between building momentum and overwhelming your group or unit. Make things happen but avoid pushing people to the point of burnout. Learn to pay attention to stress levels and pace yourself and others.
- Willing to make tough calls but humane. You may have to make tough calls right away, including letting go of marginal performers. Effective new leaders do what needs to be done, but they do it in ways that preserve people's dignity and that others perceive as fair. Keep in mind that people watch not only what you do but also how you do it.

The pivotal point for a successful transition is that a new leader cannot overcommit and then under-deliver on their promises. Instead, they need to build momentum by achieving small wins towards their credibility. Ciampa and Watkins (1999) reported new leaders must focus on three key tasks to generate momentum by the end of their six months: mastering the enabling technologies of learning, visioning, and coalition building to engage and promote supportive coalitions in turn leading to better learning for new leaders and managing oneself to exercise clear headed judgement and emotional evenness. The authors proclaimed that understanding and managing oneself is as important as knowing and managing the organization (p.34-35).

Establish Mutual Expectations and Match Strategies to Business Situation: Actions taken in the first 100 days have a disproportionate result on a new leader's overall success or failure in the following two or three years, according to Citrin and Neff (2005). The authors suggested that the first 100 days is a unique time with high risks and uncertainties, and a leader needs to build their foundation as "true

leaders" during that period. A leader needs to set expectations efficiently as it communicates expectations. Moreover, the leader must have a keen understanding of their new role, which includes developing a vision, establishing robust management processes, devising priorities, and establishing the new team (Citrin & Neff, 2005). The definition of success and how it will be measured must be unambiguously determined, especially from the new leader's direct superior.

According to Gabarro (1987), mutual expectations, trust, and influence are essential for new leaders to make successful transitions. The author argues that successful managers need to achieve three organizational tasks: assessing the organization and diagnosing its problems building a management team focused on shared expectations, especially with a cohesive team bringing timely changes to address organizational problems (p.8) A new leader can reduce risks by becoming familiar with the culture's nuances and characteristics, learning the power bases, recognizing a mandate from above and below, and not changing the world in their first 100 days (p.156-157). The authors declared that overcommitting and under-delivering is the most dangerous thing a new leader can do (p.222).

Citrin and Neff (2005) stated that establishing expectations is one thing a new leader must do right. She must establish proper expectations for herself and the team on the essential issues and priorities (p.46-51). A leader needs to establish a set of winning conditions to build a connection for alignment and successful execution. The authors claimed the conditions include making a correct diagnosis of the change challenge-its nature, depth, breadth, and the forces at play, establishing shared knowledge of the change challenges amongst the leadership team, giving multiple and continuous opportunities to improve the shared understanding through frequent progress reviews and action plans updates, creating a sense of urgency, having a limited and concentrated agenda for change and a strong commitment to engaging the early adopters rapidly, and identifying the roots of resistance and dealing with them reduces the "drag" in the process that can stop the buildup of momentum and drain the leader's time

(p.77). Expectations should continuously be measured against reality, according to Citrin and Neff (2005).

Setting expectations and alignment of strategies also involve a new leader's ability to effectively assess the technical, political, and culture within the new environment, including its operations during transitions (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2013). Understanding the "shadow organization" in terms of how things are done in the new company is vital for new leaders to navigate the new environment (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2013). According to Watkins (2013), "joining a new company is akin to an organ transplant, and you are the new organ. If you are not thoughtful in adapting to the new situation, you could end up being attacked by the organizational immune system and rejected" (p.28). Hence, a new leader must know the traditions, rituals, and practices embedded in the new culture, as stated by Watkins (2013). The technical domain involves getting familiar with the market, technologies, processes, and systems are essential. The interpersonal domain implies knowing your boss, peers, and direct reports. The cultural domain means an understanding of the new organization's norms, values, and behavioral expectations. The political domain suggests understanding the existing "shadow organization" in terms of the processes, alliances, formal structures, and how each influences decision (p.54).

During transitions, a new leader is dragged in many directions but must safeguard her time and energy, according to Watkins (2013). As a result, a top priority for a new leader is to have a precise picture of the business situation and match strategies properly. The author alleged the STARS Model as a way for new leaders to distinguish common business situations (p.71).

Table 3-1 is the STARS Model and strategies new leaders can deploy.

TABLE 3-1

The STARS model

Start-Up	Turnaround	Accelerated growth	Realignment	Sustaining success
Assembling the capabilities (people, financing, and technology) to get a new business or initiative off the ground	Saving a business or initiative widely acknowledged to be in serious trouble	Managing a rapidly expanding business	Reenergizing a previously successful organization that now faces problems	Preserving the vitality of a successful organization and taking it to the next level
Challenges Building the strategy, structures, and systems from scratch without a clear framework or boundaries Recruiting and welding together a high-performing team Making do with limited resources	Reenergizing demoralized employees and other stakeholders Making effective decisions under time pressure Going deep enough with painful cuts and difficult personnel choices	Putting in place structures and systems to permit scaling Integrating many new employees	Convincing employees that change is necessary Carefully restructuring the top team and refocusing the organization	Living in the shadow of the former leader and managing the team he or she created Playing good defense before embarking on too many new initiatives Finding ways to take the business to the next level
Opportunities You can do things right from the beginning. People are energized by the possibilities. There are no rigid preconceptions.	Everyone recognizes that change is necessary. Affected constituencies offer significant external support. A little success goes a long way.	The potential for growth helps to motivate people. People will be inclined to stretch themselves and those who work for them.	The organization has significant pockets of strength. People want to continue to see themselves as successful.	A strong team may already be in place. People are motivated to continue their history of success. A foundation for continued success (such as a long product pipeline) may be in place.

Build a Strong Team: Each new manager acquires a legacy of an existing team, their ambitions and aspirations, hidden agenda, their mistrust, and uncertain loyalty, and the history of relationships among them and between each of them and the rest of the organization (Citrin & Neff, 2005). Therefore, a new leader's primary job is to help the organization define and construct its current reality as quickly as possible, according to the authors. Gabarro (1987) claimed that new leaders should not make a change for change sake, especially if it worsens an organization's situation. The author proclaimed that new leaders need to involve subordinates and superiors in the process of change. They need to accomplish three main tasks to assess and diagnose the organization's problems, build a management team based on shared expectations, and bring changes timely to resolve problems (p.8).

An evaluation of the existing people and team is required to decide if the right people are in place to achieve the mission and change needed for the organization, according to Citrin and Neff (2005). The authors reported that individuals should be moved as promptly as possible by a new leader if they are not in the right place. Citrin and Neff (2005) also reported that an approach is to assign individuals into three categories of keepers, goners, and watchers (p.89). "Keepers are major assets; you want to inform them of their status even before their inform roles are defined to reduce their anxiety and minimize the risk of losing them. Goners are the major liabilities who subtract from the overall leadership and team capacity. Removing them quickly not only sends a clear message about your standards but often unleashes frustrated energy in the organization. Watchers are people who become major assets if they could address one or two deficiencies within a reasonable time, say 12-18 months; it is worth telling them why they are on probation and what they have to work on and by when."

Common Traps to Avoid During Transitions

Ciampa and Watkins (1999) argued that leadership failure could seriously derail careers for individuals. A transition for new leaders is not merely a transaction but a complicated process with many interdependencies that can set everyone back if a failure occurs, according to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015). Elsner and Farrands (2005) reported that "As many as 10% of all leaders are judged within the first year to not be up to "scratch." As a result, various common traps should be avoided by new leaders to make successful transitions.

Trap one is coming in with all the answers. When an individual is making a leadership transition, coming into the new situation with all of the answers can lead to failure for new leaders (Ciampa and Watkins, 1999; Citrin and Neff, 2006; Watkins, 2013). Citrin and Neff (2006) argued, "Leaders who make rash decisions are generally people who are so sure of their views that they do not gather input from knowledgeable sources. Nevertheless, the reality is that know-it-alls typically do not

know what they do not know. By not recognizing or admitting that you do not have and cannot possibly have all the answers, you shut out new perspectives, as well as the possibility of getting the valuable information and input that may lead you to new discoveries and answers." (p.240-241).

Moreover, coming in with all the answers alienates relationships and people that could assist the new leader in seeing new opportunities (Watkins, 2013). It is also dangerous for new leaders to come into the new situation with the "savior syndrome" mentality. The mentality is that "A savior believes that he or she is the embodiment of the institution and is personally responsible for its success. At the extreme, the line between their identity and the identity of the business blurs. Furthermore, in some cases, they come to believe that they are above the rules-or even laws-that bind everyone else," according to Citrin and Neff (2005). Elsner and Farrands (2006) suggested that a new leader's task in transition is to become a part of the organization he is leading and must balance his need to take others' perspectives while holding his own beliefs in terms of what will be useful in the new situation (p.35).

Trap two is believing what made you successful in the past will make you successful in the new situation and not learning. New leaders must learn to let go of their past identity and not let it manifest into the new situation (Citrin & Neff, 2005; Watkins, 2013). Leaders in transition need to learn about the new situation and climb the learning curve as quickly as possible (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). Watkins (2013) argued that "You believe you will be successful in the new role by doing the same things you did in your previous role, only more so. You fail to see that success in the new role requires you to STOP doing some things and to EMBRACE new competencies" (p.5). "What is wrong is that they have no idea how their behavior is coming across to the people who matter-their bosses, colleagues, subordinates, customers, and clients." Moreover, "They think they have all the answers, but others see it as arrogance," according to Marshall Goldsmith (2007).

Trap three is not building effective working relationships. Researchers concur that establishing a working relationship is vital for successful transitions (Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Citrin & Neff, 2005; Watkins, 2013). Gabarro (1987) reported that "Perhaps the most salient difference between the successful and failed transitions was the quality of a new manager's working relationships at the end of his first year" and can be lethal for a new leader. Gabarro (1988) defined poor working relationships as one where either the new manager or the subordinates were seen as being dissatisfied or ineffective. Mistakes are also made when new leaders concentrate too much on their upward relationships, neglect horizontal relationships, and miss opportunities to build supportive alliances (Watkins, 2013). Failure occurs when new leaders dedicate their time to listening to the wrong people who cannot help them due to being incapable, outdated, or intentionally misleading them (Ciampa & Watkins, 1999).

Trap four working in solitary or isolation. Transitions are remarkably demanding for new leaders and working in solitary or isolation is a sure way to fail (Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999). Gabarro (1987) reported that managers who failed during transitions approached the organizational task in more solitary and involved fewer people in their assessment and diagnoses. The author described it as the "Lone Ranger Syndrome" approach which leads to decisions that are seen as inappropriate or ineffective, either because the changes were based on partial or incorrect diagnoses of problems, or because the changes were badly implemented by a management group that did not support them (P.8). Furthermore, Ciampa and Watkins (1999) contended that isolation or being invisible is dangerous for new leaders since essential relationships and resources do not develop.

Trap five is conducting poor diagnoses and making inappropriate changes. According to Gilmore (1988) said a new leader can produce a culture of intended and unintended consequences. According to him, a trap for new leaders is spending too little time thinking about the new directions or

what Bennis calls an "unconscious conspiracy," As a leader climbs up the ladder, it is more challenging to know what is going on since people are less likely to share what happens, according to Citrin and Neff (2005). When new leaders conduct poor diagnoses of the new situation, inappropriate changes can be implemented, or they wait too long to implement the organization's necessary changes (Gabarro, 1987; Citrin & Neff, 2005; Elsner & Farrand, 2006; Watkins, 2013).

Citrin and Neff (2005) alleged that "One common attribute of the most successful business leaders is a sensitivity to the unwritten rules of an organization, and empathy Daniel Goleman popularized with the term emotional intelligence. An essential aspect of this skill is the ability to accurately diagnose where the real source of power lies" (p.248). The authors explained that a poor diagnosis could lead to selecting the wrong priorities or focusing on the wrong battles (p.250-251). Watkins (2013) also reinforced that new leaders should avoid the trap of not adjusting to the STARS Model and avoid using the one-size-fits-all approach to addressing the various STARS situations (p.142). The author reported a root cause of failure for new leaders in transition is either misunderstanding the demands of the situation or lacking the skills and flexibility to adapt to them (p.9).

Trap six is not setting mutual expectations. New leaders should avoid overpromising and making rush decisions during transitions. Unsuccessful managers, reported Gabarro (1987), do not set mutual expectations about performances, roles, and priorities with their team or supervisor (p.57). The author claim, "Failed transitions were characterized by vague mandates and/or a failure to gain a superior's understanding or support for important changes" (p.131). Ciampa and Watkins (1999) suggested new leaders should avoid doing too much at once. The trap is confusing or overwhelming for everyone by jumping into decisions quickly without all the facts (p. 24). Moreover, not setting the right expectation can cause a new leader's job, according to Citrin and Neff (2005).

New leaders should avoid trying to impress their bosses or others to demonstrate they are in charge (p.236). New leaders need to be upfront about what they know, avoid taking ownership right away, do not make promises without the facts, resist being impulsive, and do not jump to a conclusion during transitions, which leads to a vicious cycle of overpromising and underdelivering according to Citrin and Neff. Watkins (2013) stated that failures occur when new leaders do not negotiate or establish clear and achievable objectives with bosses and critical stakeholders. Without clear expectations, too many initiatives can get launched, or new leaders are rushed off in too many directions confusing without the resources needed (p.6).

Trap seven is having poor self-management. New leaders are judged quickly by their actions during transitions, even with little data (Gabarro, 1987; Watkin, 2013). According to Ciampa and Watkins (1999), a common trap to avoid for new leaders is having poor self-management in terms of not taking the time beforehand to assess his or her abilities for the new job and has a high need for control which ultimately leads to failure. Moreover, attempting to do too much at one time for new leaders can create a lack of clarity for expectations or priorities for everyone, according to the authors. Ciampa and Watkins contend that actions taken by new leaders during transitions can significantly impact their credibility, which is hard to reverse. Elsner and Farrands (2006) also claimed that a common myth for leaders is succeeding by being macho. The authors suggested that the myth mainly exists due to many managers being male and expected to control their emotions. Leaders are expected to be decisive in all situations and control their emotions or not to have emotions at all. However, new leaders succeed when they can be themselves and are accessible to others, especially when others can experience the new leader as being a real person (p.35-36). Therefore, new leaders need to attend to their first impression with existing staff, according to Gilmore (1988).

Trap eight is making change for change sake. New leaders often feel the pressure to make rapid changes, according to Watkins (2013). The author reported, "Often, leaders feel a self-imposed pressure to put their stamp on the organization and seek to make changes before they really understand the business; it is ready, shoot, aim" (p.141). Gabarro (1987) claimed that successful managers do not take making changes lightly since making inappropriate changes can worsen the organization (p.90).

Trap nine is not developing a cohesive team. Gilmore (1988) proclaimed that a critical task for new leaders for successful transitions is assembling and building a team. Therefore, a standard trap for new leaders is "dissing" their predecessors, according to Citrin and Neff (2005). The authors contend that dissing a predecessor is harmful since the person that previously held the jobs may still be on the premise. They recommend that new leaders be respectful and sensitive of their position and tenure (p.254).

Ciampa and Doltish (2015) reinforced that regardless of being a CEO or not, setting expectations, developing a vision, establishing a management process, creating priorities, building your management team, and doing an exceptional job at your earliest projects apply equally to anyone in leadership (p.13-14). Therefore, a standard trap for new leaders is sticking with the existing team too long, according to Ciampa and Watkins (1999). The authors argued that "Whatever the rationale, keeping team members with a history of mediocre performance seldom works" (p.23). Gabarro (1987) also reported a pattern for failure with new managers is not developing cohesive management groups with the ability to resolve conflicts within the existing group or are unwilling to address the conflicts (p.85). The author reported that one apparent difference between successful and unsuccessful managers was their ability to build a cohesive management team, especially with subordinates by the first 12 months (p.83-84).

Chapter Summary

This qualitative study aimed to explore, document, analyze, and describe the lived experiences of participants hired from the outside into senior leadership positions to understand the organization's role in the leadership transition process. While plenty of existing research is available on change management, succession planning, and leadership transition, little is known about the combined effort between organizations and the new leader to ensure successful transitions. This chapter offered literature reviews relevant to what is known about leadership transitions in terms of how it is managed by organizations, the impact of leadership transitions on the organization and new leaders, supports that are provided to new leaders by organizations, strategies for successful transitions, and common traps to avoid during transitions for new leaders, and the chapter summary.

Chapter Three

Studies indicate individuals will make several career transitions in their working lifetime, including individuals that transition into senior leadership roles. Research shows that over half of the individuals hired from the outside fail or leave within 18-months and that percentage has stood still for years (Amerson, 2005; Karaevli, 2007; Citrin & Neff, 2005; Bebb, 2009; Wentworth, 2010; Sauer, 2011; Watkins, 2013; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). For that reason, this study examined the research question "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

To answer the research question, a qualitative study was utilized to explore, document, and analyze the organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. The goal was to explore which players are involved in a new leader's transition process and what roles they played in the leader's transition process. The findings from this study can contribute to the current literature on leadership transitions and provide a theory to further advance organizations' support for new leaders that are in transitions.

This chapter will include several topics. The topics entail the method, design, sampling, instruments, data collection, data analysis, establishing a quality study, and a chapter summary.

Method

For this qualitative study, grounded theory was selected since a lack of research was available to understand an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired from the outside. A qualitative methodology, such as grounded theory, is appropriate for exploring a research problem when a complex and detailed understanding of the problem is needed, according to Creswell (2013; p. 65). Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 to build a theory that is

grounded in data rather than deducing testable hypotheses from existing theories (Charmaz, 2014). Creswell (2015) reported, “grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants” (p.83). The grounded theory method “consists of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves. Thus, researchers construct a theory ‘grounded’ in their data,” according to Charmaz (2014). Creswell (2010) stated, “A theory is an explanation of something or an understanding that the researcher develops. This explanation or understanding is a drawing together, in grounded theory, of theoretical categories that are arrayed to show how the theory works” (p.85). Grounded theory is not a “locked step” research methodology where the research has to complete one step before the other before moving onto the next, according to Birks & Mills (2015). The process is iterative and recursive throughout the study according to the authors.

Design

This study was designed to conduct interviews with individuals hired from the outside into senior leadership positions at a director level or higher and one colleague involved in the transition process to determine an organization's role. Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, & Ormston (2014) proclaimed a smaller sample size in qualitative research is a key characteristic allowing for more in-depth exploration of the phenomena (p.112). The primary reasons for the smaller sample size are that if data is analyzed correctly, additional fieldwork would not add minimal evidence. Moreover, the authors stated incidence or prevalence are not concerns of qualitative research with no requirements needed for estimates to ensure the sample is of sufficient scale since the information collected from qualitative studies can lead to rich details (p.117). According to Charmaz (2014), twelve interviews are enough to gather common views of the themes and experiences amongst relatively homogeneous people, although the number of

sample size is dependent on the research question. Corbin & Strauss (2015) claimed there are no definite participants numbers needed since grounded theory allows researchers to have flexibility in sampling participants when it comes to building a theory. It is more important for the researcher to include samples that leads to “inclusion of constituencies, events, processes and so on, that can illuminate and inform that understanding” according to Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, & Ormston (2014).

Sampling

Purposive sampling is essential in ground theory, according to Birks and Mills (2015), for researchers to generate or collect data and code before repeating the analysis process. Ritchie and Lewis (2015) reported purposive sampling is "members of a sample are chosen with a "purpose" to represent a type in relation to key criterion." Purposive sampling ensures relevance to the subject matters where participants in each of the selected criteria have enough diversity, and the characteristics can be explored (p.113).

For this study, the homogeneous sampling strategy was utilized where study participants and at least one colleague provided a detailed picture of the new leader's transition experience and how the organization supported them. The interviews from the sampling were used for developing explanations and a theory for understanding the organization's role in a new leader's transition process for those hired from the outside.

The criteria to be a study participant in this research constituted an individual who was hired from the outside into a senior leadership position at a director level or higher. The participant must be new to the organization with no previous work history in that organization, and can be in any business industry. The new leader study participant must nominate at least one of their colleagues or someone in the organization that was involved or aware of their transition process to be interviewed by the

researcher. The colleague can be the new leader's supervisor, a human resource associate, a peer, team member, a board member, etc. 24 interviews will be conducted for this study from study participants and colleagues.

Data Collection Method

The primary data collection method selected for this study is interviews with participants with unstructured questions. Interviews, according to Mishler (1986), are a discourse between the researcher and the participant where “Questioning and answering are ways of speaking that are grounded in and depend on culturally shared and often tacit assumptions about how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings, and intentions” occurs (p.7). Interviews allow participants to provide an in-depth perspective of their understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomenon is located and for comprehensive cover (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, & Ormston (2014). Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) proclaimed, “the qualitative research interviews attempt to understand the world from the subject’s points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.” Furthermore, interviews provide the primary tool for generating focused data for developing abstract conceptual categories, according to Charmaz (2014, p. 87). Several interview methods exist, including unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The authors argued that unstructured interviews allow participants to speak freely. In contrast, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to maintain consistency over the concepts that are covered in each interview, and structured interviews use a structured interview guide that provides the exact set of questions for a participant to respond for consistency. A structured interview is least useful for data collection in grounded theory (p.39). Unstructured interviews are best for generating rich data for theory building in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). According to

Charmaz (2014), “Intensive interviews typically means a gently guided, one-sided conversation that explores a person’s substantial experience with the research topic” where a researcher encourages, listens, and learns (p. 56-57).

For this study, the format of the interviews was unstructured with open-ended questions. According to Charmaz (2014), open-ended questions encourage unanticipated statements and stories to emerge. Appendix A contains the interview guide that were used with participants, and appendix B entails the interview guide for the new leader’s colleague.

Research Instrument

In the past 20 years, I have transitioned multiple times into leadership roles with new organizations and different industries. This experience is the primary reason I am interested in learning about an organization’s role in a new leader’s transition process. I want to understand better and support new leaders in the transition to having the best chance for success since a high percentage of them fail or leave within 18 months that are hired from the outside. Support for new leaders is often limited or missing besides the initial orientation and onboarding processes based on my experience. Therefore, I feel strongly organizations need to examine their role and commit to providing support for new leaders in transitions since the cost of failure or departure is significant.

In qualitative research, Corbin and Strauss (2008) argued that “Researchers are translators of other person’s words and actions.” For this reason, interviews were recorded. Before and after each interview, notes and reflections were documented by the researcher in a memo, including how decisions were made along the way. Charmaz (2014) argued a researcher’s objectives with the interview is to “attending to your research participants and constructing theoretical analyses” (p.87).

The researcher identified participants for this study through her professional networks for individuals that met three criteria:

- a. The participant must be hired from the outside into a senior leadership position of director level or higher within the last two years from the date of this study.
- b. At the time of the interview, the participant's status can be employed or unemployed.
- c. The participant must agree to provide at least one colleague, such as a supervisor, human resource, peer, a board member, or someone that was involved in their transition process to be interviewed by the researcher.

The researcher contacted her networks through phone calls or emails about the study utilizing the outlines provided in Appendix C or D. Once an individual was identified and met the first two criteria (a) and (b) listed above, the researcher contacted them to set up a virtual meeting using a computer platform, such as zoom to share information about the study as outlined in Appendix D. If the individual was not able to participate in the study, the researcher thanked the person and asked if they know someone else that might be a good fit for the study.

For individuals that met all three criteria (a), (b), and (c) as listed above and agreed to participate in the study, the researcher classified them as a study participants and sent information by email containing the interview guide and consent form. The researcher scheduled a meeting to conduct the interview with each participant virtually based upon their availability. The researcher sent Appendix A or B along with Appendix F or G, the informed consent form to the participants.

Data Collection

For this study, the data collection included the compilation of the participants' demographic data, employer data, and transcriptions of the interview recordings with study participants. The transcription from each participant's interview was verified by the participant to ensure accuracy of information as noted in study verification form in Appendix H.

The researcher recorded memos in a journal throughout the study to document her thoughts, ideas, or new contents as they developed related to the study (Birks & Mills, 2005). Charmaz (2014) claimed that a memo is essential for a researcher for several reasons, including an interactive space for recording her thoughts and a place to review data, codes and ideas, and hunches developed by the researcher. The author also reported that journaling allows a researcher to engage in reflexivity and avoid preconceiving the data (p.165). Memoing is a way for the researcher to ensure quality in grounded theory and for mapping activities as an audit trail while interrogating data (Birks & Mills, 2015; p.39-40). Furthermore, journaling during data collection is important to write a researcher's reactions during the study as there is a reciprocal influence between the interviewer and interviewee to check for signs of biases and assumptions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; p.47).

Before any data collection begins, the researcher presented the study proposal to the dissertation committee and presented the protocol research to the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) for review and approval. Within the IRB application, the interview guide and consent form were included with information regarding the title of the research, the research question, target population, how data will be collected and the process used, an explanation for how data will be handled to protect the study participants, how the researcher will address issues if any arises, and potential risks for participants within the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researcher informed study participants of the approval by IRBs.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, & Ormston (2014) argued that there is no agreed rules or procedures for analyzing qualitative data (p. 270). "Analysis is a process of generating, developing, and verifying conceptions-a process that builds over time and with the acquisition of data," according to Corbin and Strauss (2008).

For this study, participants were interviewed by the researcher virtually using a computer platform such as zoom or google hangouts, or phone for the interviews. Following the interview, the researcher interpreted the initial data and began constant comparison where the data was matched against data for similarities and differences to ensure consistency (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The authors proclaimed, "interpreting means assigning meaning to raw data in the forms of concepts. The very notion of interpreting implies that a concept is a researcher's understanding of the meaning implicated in the words and actions of participants (p.66). Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, & Ormston (2014) emphasized that "analysis does not begin when the researcher has finished collecting their data but is an ongoing and inherent part of the whole process of qualitative research and should infuse all aspects" (p.275).

To begin the constant comparison procedure, the researcher reviewed the raw data from the interviews and begin the initial coding. The researcher reviewed interview transcripts line by line to conduct the initial coding and remained open to all possible theoretical directions (Charmaz, 2014). The author suggest that the researcher ask the following questions during the initial coding: "What is this data a study of? What do the data suggest? Pronounced? Leave unsaid? From whose point of view? What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate (p.116). After the initial coding, the researcher began to form focused coding. Charmaz (2014) described focused coding as "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through and analyze a large amount of data. Focused coding requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely. It can also involve coding your initial codes" (p.138). Finally, the research moved into the theoretical coding procedure after focused coding to determine "How the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory" (p.150).

The researcher continuously compared data and reflected on the meaning of what was heard and seen throughout the interviews (Swanson & Holton, 2005). With interviews, theoretical directions begin to emerge during data analyzes when specific responses stand out and interview statements cluster during coding and from the researcher's memos, according to Charmaz (2014). The direction also helped the researcher identify questions to ask participants in subsequent interviews, and theoretical centrality starts to form where ideas and areas of inquiry leads are pursued. The direction and centrality develop from interviews leading a researcher to theoretical adequacy of categories in later interviews (p.90). Charmaz (2014) argued that "Theoretical adequacy gets at the core of theoretical sampling. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to make theoretical categories robust".

The researcher in this study paid attention to the participants' language during interviews and actively engaged in the conversations to understand the participants' sense-making of the phenomena rather than the researcher's assumptions by seeking clear definitions of terms, situations, and assumptions. The researcher attended to the participant's meanings, intentions, actions, and language throughout the study. The researcher also documented reactions from each interview into a memo (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Establishing a Quality Study

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), quality does not just happen in research; quality includes an innovative, thoughtful, and creative component (p.301). Birks and Mills (2005) proclaimed credibility, regardless of which methodological approaches used are established with the researcher's expertise, methodological congruence, and procedural precision in grounded theory. A researcher's experience and skills such as scholarly writing, accessing resources, and the ability to manage a project are needed (p.33). Methodological congruence is the foundation of a credible quality study.

Maintenance of audit trail is essential in any research project, and decision making should be recorded

(p.37). Charmaz (2014) argued that credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness are essential criteria for evaluating grounded theory studies. The author claimed for credibility, questions should include: "Has your research achieved intimate familiarities with the setting or topic? Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data? Have you made systematic comparisons between observations and between categories? Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis? Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment-and agree with your claims?" (p.337). For originality, questions should include "Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insights, and does the analysis provide new concept rendering of the data?" (p.337). Resonance should contain questions "Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience? Have you revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meaning?" (p.337). Finally, usefulness questions should include "Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds? Do your analytic categories suggest any generic processes?" (p. 338). Although Charmaz (2014) proclaimed that "A strong combination of originality and credibility increases resonance, usefulness, and the subsequent value of the contribution" (p. 338).

For this study to ensure credibility and quality, the researcher recorded interviews and all activities related to the study with detailed memos. The memos, journaling, and interview transcriptions were used as an audit trail of the activities and how decisions were made throughout the study. If questions or challenges arise within the study, the researcher utilized her program chair and dissertation committee as a sounding board. The researcher also had study participants check the interview transcriptions to ensure the accuracy of information and comment to validate the findings (Birks & Mills, 2005; p.96).

Chapter Summary

This study used a qualitative ground theory methodology to explore, document, and analyze an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired from the outside.

Participants were identified for the study from the researcher's networks with a purposive sampling strategy. Participants were interviewed and provided with interview guides that had open-ended questions to collect data. The researcher used constant comparison procedures to code and analyzed the data. The study ensured quality by utilizing the researcher's experience in leadership, protocol and procedures of grounded theory, best practices during interviews, and keeping a detailed audit of activities and how decisions were made throughout the study.

Chapter IV

As noted earlier, existing literatures show that leadership transition is one of the most challenging times for individuals within their working careers, with half of them failing or leaving within 18 months, and that percentage increases for individuals that are hired from the outside (Gilmore, 1988; Gabarro, 1987; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Watkins, 2003). While research is available to guide individuals that are making a transition into a new leadership position, a lack of research exist to understand an organization's role in a leadership transition process. For that reason, this qualitative study was intended to explore, document, and analyze an organization's role in a leadership transition process for individuals that are hired from outside into senior leadership roles. The study examined who plays a role in a new leader's transition process, and how organizations facilitate the transition process for new leaders?

To examine the research question for this study, the researcher used a qualitative grounded theory method with a purposive, homogeneous sampling strategy to identify study participants. The researcher interviewed new leader study participants and one of their colleagues that was involved in their transition process utilizing unstructured questions to explore an organization's role. The researcher applied a constant comparison data analysis procedure to develop themes by examining the data and identifying indicators. The researcher constantly compared indicators to indicators, codes to codes, and categories to categories throughout the process. Correlating threads and patterns within the categories were identified, which produced the themes in this study. This study's findings can be used to contribute to the existing literature on leadership transitions and provide guidance for organizations to support new leaders in transitions effectively. This chapter will entail descriptions of the study

participants in the research, the research question, review of the data analysis and themes, and a chapter summary.

Description of the Study Participants

A purposive homogeneous sampling strategy was used for recruiting study participants for this research. Seventeen leaders responded to the researcher and were willing to participate and nominated one of their colleagues. The participants were identified through the researcher's professional network and to be a study participant for this study, individuals needed to meet three criteria:

1. The participant must be hired from the outside into a senior leadership position at a director level or higher within the last two years from the date of the interview with the researcher.
2. At the time of the interview, the participant's status can be employed or unemployed.
3. The new leader study participant must nominate at least one of their colleagues, such as a supervisor, board member, human resource, peer, or a direct report involved in their transition process, to be interviewed by the researcher.

17 new leaders (NL) responded to the researcher and willing to participate in the study, however, three of their nominated colleagues did not respond to the researcher. As a result, 14 NL and their colleagues were eligible study participants for this study totaling 28 interviews. The interviews with each of the NL participants were between 60-70 minutes, and the colleague study participants were between 30-45 minutes.

The participants in this study completed informed consent forms and were sent interviewing guides before the interview. The process ensured confidentiality and a participant's willingness to partake in the study. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Once the transcriptions were completed, participants were sent the interview transcription by email to verify accuracy and make edits

as needed. The recorded interviews and transcriptions, including the researcher's memo and journal, were used by the researcher to capture rich details from the participants and reviewed for saturation in the data to answer the research question.

Below is the brief demographic overview of the study participants, type of business, and industries.

- 65% of the NL participants' ethnicity was white, and 35% were leaders of color.
- 71% were women leaders, and 29% were men.
- 65% of the NL participants did not know anyone in the company before starting their leadership position.
- One of the study participants lived in Wisconsin, including the location of their company.
- One participant was located in Rhode Island, but her company was located in New York.
- The remainder of the participants lived in Minnesota, including the location of their companies or headquartered. However, two of the companies were global and one was a national company.
- 59% of the NL participants were hired to backfill existing leadership positions in their companies, while 41% were hired into brand new leadership roles that did not exist in their companies.
- Two of the 14 NL participants were in Chief Executive Officers (CEO) positions, one as a Vice President (VP), one as an Assistant Deputy Director, and the remainder were director-level leaders. However, not all of the director level NL participants had a "director" title based on their company's naming convention.
- 29% of the participants worked in the government sector, 6% worked in the healthcare sector, 18% worked in the private sector, and 47% worked in the nonprofit sector.

- The sectors of the participants covered state and local government in workforce, education, revenue, housing, and other sectors, including software, accounting, chemical, foundations, chambers, and policies.
- 13 out of the 14 NL participants were experienced leaders with prior leadership and managerial backgrounds before transitioning into their current roles. Although, one of the NL participants was a first-time leader that transitioned into an Executive Director role.
- Six out of the 14 NL participants were considered individual contributors that did not lead a team of people. However, the participants reported working across teams in their organizations, leading key projects, and coordinating individuals.

Table 1-New Leader (NL) Study Participants Demographic Overview

New Leader	Leader of Color	Gender	Access to an insider at the time of hire	Industry	Type	Geographic Profile	Size of Company	Leadership Vacancy Status	Experience Leader	Length in the New Leader's Role
New Leader A	No	Male	Yes	Revenue	Government or municipality	Local	Large	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	1 year, 3 months
New Leader B	Yes	Female	No	Workforce	Government or municipality	Local	Large	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	1 year, 10 months
New Leader C	No	Female	Yes	Economic Development	Nonprofit Organization	Local	Small	New Leadership Role in Company	Experienced Leader	7 months
New Leader D	No	Female	No	Education	Government or municipality	Local	Large	New Leadership Role in Company	Experienced Leader	11 months
New Leader E	Yes	Female	No	Chamber	Nonprofit Organization	Local	Small	Back Filled Vacant Role	First-time Executive Leader	1 year, 1 month
New Leader F	No	Female	No	Software	Private	Multinational	Large	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	9 months
New Leader G	No	Female	No	Financial/Policy	Nonprofit Organization	Local	Small	Back Filled Vacant Role	First-time Executive Leader	7 months
New Leader H	No	Male	Yes	Health/Mental Health	Nonprofit Organization	Local	Medium	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	1 year, 9 months
New Leader I	No	Male	Yes	Accounting Firm	Private	National	Large	New Leadership Role in Company	Experienced Leader	2 years

New Leader J	Yes	Female	No	Housing	Government or municipality	Local	Large	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	1 year, 4 months
New Leader K	No	Female	No	Foundations	Nonprofit Organization	National	Small	New Leadership Role in Company	Experienced Leader	4 months
New Leader L	Yes	Female	No	Public Safety	Government or municipality	Local	Large	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	1 year, 4 months
New Leader M	No	Male	No	Chemicals, Service, Water Management, Food Safety, Infection Prevention	Private	Multinational	Large	New Leadership Role in Company	Experienced Leader	1 year, 7 months
New Leader N	No	Female	Yes	Policy	Nonprofit Organization	Local	Small	Back Filled Vacant Role	Experienced Leader	4 months

The 14 colleague study participants included individuals that were considered peers, direct reports, supervisors, and company executives to the new leaders. Below is an overview of the relationships between the new leaders and the nominated colleague participants in this study.

Table 2-Colleague Study Participants Demographic Overview

STUDY PARTICIPANTS	RELATIONSHIP ASSOCIATION	TITLE
Colleague A	Colleague-Peer Level Leader	Director
Colleague B	Direct Report	Manager
Colleague C	Colleague-Peer Level Leader	Senior Director
Colleague D	Supervisor	Chief Marketing & Communications Officer
Colleague E	Supervisor	Vice President
Colleague F	Colleague-Executive Leader	Chief Marketing Officer
Colleague G	Direct Report	Director
Colleague H	Direct Report	Director
Colleague I	Supervisor	Principal
Colleague J	Colleague-Peer Level Leader	Chief Operating Officer
Colleague K	Supervisor	Broad Chair/Chief Operating Officer
Colleague L	Supervisor	Assistant Commissioner
Colleague M	Colleague-Team Members	Lead
Colleague N	Direct Report	Director

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants A

Leader A works in the communications department, supervises a team, and works closely with the organization's senior leaders. Before applying for the position, Leader A contacted a few people he knew to obtain information about the company during the recruiting and hiring process. Before joining the company, Leader A worked in multiple state agencies and reported that he enjoyed that type of work environment. Leader A is an experienced leader who held numerous leadership roles in the private and public sectors, similar to his current position. During the interview with the researcher, Leader A had been in the position for about 15-months.

Colleague A is a director who is a peer to the NL participant in a different department. She works closely with Leader A to support their company's overall communications plans. Colleague A had been with the agency for over 11 years in multiple roles.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants B

Leader B had been in her current position for about 22 months during the researcher's interview with her. Leader B backfilled a leadership role where the incumbent had retired and overseeing several large teams. She was new to the industry and did not have experience in that particular field and had not worked for local government prior to this position. Leader B is an experienced leader with an extensive leadership background in various sectors.

Colleague B reports to the NL B participant as one of her senior managers. Colleague B had been with the company for about two years and was an experienced professional in the private sector. Colleague B was also new to the industry and was one of the key individuals who supported Leader B during the transition process.

New Leader and Colleagues Study Participants C

Leader C had been with the company seven months at the time of the interview with the researcher. Leader C worked with her current company in a different capacity before being employed there. She knew many of the insiders in the organization, including her supervisor. However, Leader C's position was newly created in the company. Leader C has extensive leadership experience and transitioned into her new role during the pandemic.

Colleague C had been with the company for several years and was considered a peer colleague to Leader C. Colleague C was highly involved in Leader C's transition process. Colleague C noted that the two of them had worked together in the past in a different capacity before Leader C joined their company.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants D

Leader D was in her role for 11 months at the interview with the researcher. Leader D started her role a few days before the pandemic's stay-at-home order was announced. She held numerous leadership positions in the foundation industry and had not worked in state government before taking her current position. Before joining the company, Leader D worked remotely for about a decade and had not worked in an office team environment for many years. Leader D's position was newly created in their company to service stakeholders across the state.

Colleague D is an executive leader in the company. She started a few years before Leader D joined the company. Colleague D supervises Leader D. However, the foundation area was outside Colleague D's area of expertise. Colleague D stated being new to the field of foundation work and commented she was also new to state government and education industries.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants E

Leader E had been in her position for 13 months at the time of the interview with the researcher. This role is Leader E's first executive director position, with no prior management experience. Leader E

works for a small chamber organization as the Executive Director, but has expertise in the same industry. In addition, Leader E concurrently works for a larger chamber organization that supports her work within the small chamber organization.

Colleague E is Leader E's direct supervisor and is an executive leader in their organization. However, Colleague E reported that she is also a newer supervisor. She is also new to the field of chamber work and transitioned from a different industry prior to her role now.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants F

Leader F had been in her role for about nine months at the time of the interview with the researcher. The company actively recruited Leader F for her specific leadership position specializing in sales leadership training and development. Leader F started her leadership role during the pandemic going from the health industry to the technology field in software. Leader F is an experienced leader with an extensive background in sales and leadership. Leader F went from a national company to an international company.

Colleague F is a senior leader in their company and is Leader F's colleague. Colleague F began her role a few months before Leader F joined the company and was one of the first person to contact Leader F to proactively welcome her to their company. Colleague F is an experienced leader who stated to welcome Leader F personally since their company and the industry were predominately occupied by men.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants G

Leader G had been in her leadership role for seven months at the time of the interview. Leader G is the Chief Executive Officer and was recruited by a recruitment firm for the position. Leader G's position is the NL participant's first C-Suite position and joined the company during the pandemic.

Leader G came from the non-profit industry that focused on housing into the financial and community development areas.

Colleague G was also in a new leadership position at the time of the interview with the researcher. She had been with the company for a few years and was recently promoted into her current role as director. Colleague G reports to Leader G and was informally assigned to help Leader G transitioned into her role.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants H

Leader H had been in his leadership role for approximately 21 months at the time of the interview. Before joining the company as the Chief Executive Officer, Leader H held a top leadership position at a large state agency. Leader H has extensive leadership experience in the field of government and had worked in the nonprofit sector before taking on his current position.

Colleague H participant had been in the company several years and was recently promoted to her position as director. She reports to Leader H. Colleague H commented that she held several management roles in their company prior to her role now, but this was the first time she had reported to the CEO of their company.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants I

Leader I had been in his role about two years at the time of the interview with the researcher. Leader I came from the nonprofit sector as a Chief Financial Officer into the for-profit industry. Leader I had been in numerous executive leadership positions in the nonprofit industry, but he not had worked in the for-profit sector before taking on his current position.

Colleague I had been with his company for about 15 years when he met Leader I and learned that Leader I was seeking another job opportunity. Therefore, Colleague I and his company created the new

position for Leader I due to its alignment with their company's goals. Colleague I is the supervisor for Leader I.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants J

Leader J had been in her role for 16 months at the time of the interview with the researcher. She was appointed to the position as a top leader in their agency. Leader J had worked as an experienced leader in the nonprofit chamber industry before joining state government in the public sector. Leader J's current role is the highest leadership position she has held, with the largest teams she has managed.

Colleague J is also a top leader in their company and had been in the company for about six years. Colleague J is a peer to Leader J. She also reported coming from outside the public sector but did similar work in the private sector.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants K

Leader K had been in her role for about four months at the interview with the researcher. Leader K transitioned into her role during the pandemic from a larger nonprofit organization to a small start-up nonprofit organization. Leader K was the company's first employee and works remotely.

Colleague K was one of the founding board members that started the foundation. She was a key player in how the company began and had a close relationship with other board members due to their relationship with the founder.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants L

Leader L had been in the role for about 16 months at the time of the interview with the researcher. Leader L is an experienced leader who also came from another agency and recruited for the position due to her expertise in achieving results. Leader L manages about 600 people, which is entirely

different from the number of people she had managed previously. Leader L made the transition into her role during the pandemic.

Colleague L was an experienced leader with years leading and managing people in multiple sectors. Colleague L is the supervisor for Leader L and had been in his role for several months before hiring Leader L.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants M

Leader M had been in his role for roughly 19 months at the time of the interview with the researcher. Leader M's role and his unit were new to their company. Before joining the company, Leader M worked for state government. He came from the public sector into the for-profit industry and a large international company. Leader M is an experienced leader with years of experience in multiple sectors.

Colleague M is a peer for Leader M. Colleague M was hired a few months before Leader M started his role. She was also new to the industry from the higher education sector.

New Leader and Colleague Study Participants N

Leader N had been in her role for about four months at the time of the interview. The position that Leader N held is the top leadership role in their company. Leader N transitioned from higher education into the non-profit sector. She is an experienced leader with an extensive background in leadership. She come from a large institution into their very small organization and now reports to their Board Chair. Leader N transitioned into her role during the pandemic.

Leader N noted that since their company started about 20 years ago, she has been the first person hired from the outside to lead their company. Within that time, Leader N had only been the third Executive Director in their company.

Colleague N had been in her role for over three years and is an experienced leader in their company. Colleague N reports to Leader N and helped transitioned Leader N into their organization.

Industry and Sector Overview

Nine or 64% of the 14 participants were new to their industries and sectors, while 36% or 5 of the 14 new leaders transitioned into the same industry from their previous leadership position. Aside from transitioning into new industries, 13 or 93% of the NL participants transitioned into a different company size.

Table 3-Changes in industry and company size overview for the new leader participants

Participants	New to Industry (Government, Education, workforce, software, start-up or entrepreneurship) etc.)	New to Sector (Non-Profit or For-Profit)	Company size changed for the participant (Large, Mid-size, or small)
A			
B	x	x	x
C			x
D	x	x	x
E			x
F	x		x
G	x	x	x
H		x	x
I	x	x	x
J	x	x	x
K	x	x	x
L			x
M	x	x	x
N	x	x	x

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to answer the research question, "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?" To answer the question, this study explored new leader study participants' lived experiences with the transition process being hired from the outside into director-level leadership positions or higher. The researcher interviewed 28 study

participants in this study including 14 new leader and 14 colleague study participants about their role in the new leader's transition process.

Study participants received an interview guide with questions from the researcher before their scheduled virtual interview meetings. Virtual meetings occurred due to the pandemic with Covid-19. As a result, the majority of interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom, but two were conducted by phone with study participants.

Although an interview guide was sent to participants, the interview format was unstructured allowing the researcher to follow the participants' lead based on their responses. This approach enabled the researcher to ask appropriate follow-up questions for clarifications and allowed the interview to be free-flowing with more authenticity between the study participants and the researcher. The researcher wanted to ensure the participants felt comfortable sharing their experience and insights about their leadership transition experience authentically.

The interview questions for the new leader study participants were related to their transition experience and how the organization facilitated the transition process, including who was involved in their transition process. To further examine the organization's role in the new leaders' transition process, questions for the colleague study participants were about their involvement in the new leader's transition process and their specific role in the transition process, including how their organization facilitated the transition process for the new leader.

Data Analysis

The information in this data analysis section is organized by the emerging themes from the study with new leader and colleagues study participants, followed by a combined list of themes from all study participants. Below is the list of themes and sub-themes for quick references from each group of the study participants.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
THEME ONE	Recruitment and Hiring Experience
1.1	Access to Insiders
1.2	Recruitment Firms and Executive Coaches
1.3	Time Between Jobs
1.4	Transitioning during the Pandemic
1.5	Preparation
THEME TWO	Onboarding Experience
2.1	Transition & Onboarding Experience
2.2	Orientation Experience
2.3	Training Experience
THEME THREE	On the Job Experience
3.1	Assumed Expectations
3.2	Navigating the New Culture
3.3	Confidence
3.4	Learning Plan
3.5	Support Experience
3.6	Successes & Early Wins
THEME FOUR	Transitioning From the Outside Challenges Experience
4.1	Lack of Industry Knowledge
4.2	Company Culture
4.3	Dealing with Multiple Crisis
4.4	Dealing with the Compounding “Newness” of Things
4.5	Lack of Structured Support
THEME FIVE	Desired Support for New Leaders

5.1	Structured Support System
5.2	Provide Training
5.3	Provide Tailored Support to Match the New Leader's Situation

Theme One: Recruiting and Hiring Experience

The first theme that emerged for the study participants was related to their recruiting and hiring experience producing five sub-themes. During this process, most participants commented about their experience and access to insiders, executive coaches, preparation for the new position, and the pandemic.

Sub-theme 1.1: Access to Insiders: Most study participants mentioned that having access to an insider such as an old colleague from another company or someone they know that worked inside the company during the recruiting and hiring process helped their decision to apply for the leadership position. The study participants stated that having the insider's information about the company's culture and work environment helped them determine alignment between their personal and professional interests and how that fits with the company during the recruiting and hiring process. One participant reported, *"When this position opened up, I knew the person who held this position previously. I knew why she had left, and I reached out to her and was able to get some additional information about the position from her. I also knew a couple of people who had worked or who currently worked there, so I was able to reach out to them to get some more information. Then I just decided to throw my hat in the ring and see what would happen."* Another participant commented that the relationship she had with her supervisor and partnerships with the funders before she took the position allowed her the opportunity to co-create the leadership role and scope of work she would be doing in the

position. She attributes that to the great relationships and skills she brought to the table, especially the relationships with insiders.

Sub-theme 1.2: Recruitment Firms and Executive Coaches: Most study participants noted they did not work with recruitment firms during the recruiting and hiring process and heard about the positions from their networks or job boards. Although three participants reported working with recruitment firms. Those participants that were hired by recruitment firms received executive coaches to support their transition process, while the study participants who were hired directly by their companies did not. However, one of the study participants hired an executive coach to provide extra support during the transition process.

The study participants who had access to some type of executive coaches reported it being helpful during the transition process for developing their strategic plans or being a thought partner for them. However, participants said that some of the coaches did not have the specific industry knowledge they needed due to the complexity of their industries and roles. One participant stated, "*She definitely encouraged me a lot, and she's still really available to me.*" Another participant said, "*The search firm did give me an onboarding coach, and I've enjoyed meeting with her. She's been helpful, but I think the challenge is that she is not an expert on that organization. So, why is it just executive coaching, right? I think that for me, I needed more orientation.*"

Sub-Theme 1.3: Time Between Jobs: Study participants reported that the time they had off between their old jobs and the new ones impacted their preparation for the new position. 13 out of the 14 participants stated that they prepared for their new roles when they started in the position. Only one participant mentioned having a month off between the two jobs, which helped her prepare for the role,

while the rests of the study participants did not have that time between jobs. However, three study participants stated that if they had more time off between jobs, it would have given them more time for preparation and mental breaks to recover from their old jobs. Two of the three participants also mentioned they had been in toxic work environments and the time off would have benefited them greatly to recover mentally and to effectively prepare for their new jobs. Though most participants indicated that they felt pressured by the new company to start as soon as possible even though they recognized they needed the time off between the two jobs.

Sub-Theme 1.4: Transitioning during the Pandemic: Four of the study participants started their jobs during the pandemic when most companies were shutting down and going virtual with limited in-person contact. This on top of the civil unrest in Minnesota and across the country added significant challenges for participants during the transition process including the recruiting and hiring processes. Participants reported that their entire recruiting and hiring process was completed virtual, which was also new for their companies. One participant stated, *"There was no systems. There's no processes to do it without having you in person for the interviewing process."* Therefore, her supervisor was pushing the human resources team to figure out how to get study participant hired virtually since the process was new for them. Participants also reported the first time they met someone from the company was on their first day briefly to obtain their computers and equipment needed for their jobs. One of the participants commented that she still has not met anyone in the company after nine months in person. Another person said, *"The fact that it's Covid too. Nothing's happening in person now with Covid, and I'm working in my basement, and everything is on Zoom. That in itself is a different animal. I think I'm going to have to learn how to do this job again when we come out of Covid. When things start to go back to in-person because it will be a different job again. I'll have to tease that out for myself. What's it going to*

be like. That's more about lifestyle versus the actual job, too." In addition, the majority of participants mentioned that dealing with the crisis of the pandemic in their new role added stress to their transition process.

Sub-Theme 1.5: Preparation: Study participants reported preparing for their new roles by allocating time right before starting the job by conducting self-reflection and developing draft strategic plans and goals. Participants reviewed their company's history, mission, values, strategic plans and priorities, and products on the company's website for their strategic planning process and priorities. Most participants put together some type of a 30-60-90 plan as part of their preparation during the transition process. Although for the participants that had access to insiders indicated that the knowledge they gained about the company's culture, leadership, and environment was particularly helpful in their preparation process. One participant said, *"I took one month off, which not many people have the luxury to do. I spent that month to mentally prepare and do my homework. I met with all of the HR people. I met with a few key people ahead of starting. I met with my supervisor twice before starting so, I came in and I had already got all my data from them. I asked a lot of information ahead and did my homework before coming in."*

Other participants discussed ways they prepared for the role was meeting with predecessors, interim leaders or contractors to learn about the company culture and for their insights. The information swayed how participants prioritized their work during the transition process by helping them gain a better sense of what to expect in the new environment. One of the participants commented her preparation as, *"I guess going into it, I was trying to employ an open mind of knowing that I was hired for my skill sets and what the review committee had heard from me. They believe that I was well suited and a good fit to do this work. And co-created, I think too, is another big piece of it. Going into that, I guess with having the frameset of pursuing humbly, yet confidently, humbly in the new environment and*

culture, but confidently trusting my skillset, and emotional intelligence and social awareness to be able to figure it out. Also, to trust the inquiry process of asking questions. So, I'd have to say part of the way that I approached it too, outside of the first few days of HR and IT setting you up with a basic right-computer, here's how you get your benefits, there was really nothing else set up for me. In terms of onboarding, other than leaning into my direct supervisor and those conversations and wanting to hear from her, what she thinks I should be doing in these first few things. I guess another thing was just talking with people in my network. What would they do right in their first week for things that I'm looking over here? The benefit of having done this virtually right. I can also pull out a book that's on my desk.” This, along with defining her leadership in the role and ethos of being people and relationship first, especially in the context of virtual and trying to figure it out. Another participant commented, “I prepared by setting up expectations that there would be a lot of unknowns. I would have to essentially do my best not to be frustrated and be more patient with learning a new process, learning frankly, an entire new landscape of the language of what we do and acronyms and how things interact and so forth. But also, keeping in mind that the purpose ultimately for the entity is to make money. It’s a business, and as long as we keep some simple concepts in mind that I know what the goal is, and we’ll figure out the rest. This was really a startup.”

Theme Two: Onboarding Process Experience

A second theme that emerged for the new leader study participants was related to their onboarding experience after beginning the position. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) defines the onboarding process as “New employee onboarding is the process of integrating a new employee with a company and its culture, as well as getting a new

hire the tools and information needed to become a productive member of the team.” This created three sub-themes related to the study participants’ onboarding process experience.

Sub-theme 2.1: Transition and Onboarding Experience: All participants reported having minimal onboarding plans in place for them and commented that their companies assumed they already know what to do at their level of leadership. However, participants described their experiences differently. One of the participants described their transition experience by stating, “*the transition was a lot.*” Another claimed, “*the transition was challenging.*” One participant said that “*the older I get, the harder it feels making a transition,*” and part of the reason is “*I feel older, and it’s like, am I adapting the way I should in absorbing everything I should as quickly as individuals who are younger do. I’m not sure it’s a fair statement, but it just how I felt, and seemingly it’s worked out okay so far.*” A participant also mentioned that “*the transition was hard.*” At the same time, another participant described their transition as a challenging journey. One of them also stated that she would not have been set up for success if she did not come from the same industry into her new role. A participant described her experience as, “*I don’t want to say that it was completely smooth*” and said it as “*a little clunky.*” One participant described her experience, saying, “*Wow, the complexity of it all. Transitions can be so messy.*” She commented, “*onboarding for me was just stepping into all the meetings, stepping into the cadence of the work, and asking questions.*”

A participant stated the organization probably assumed director-level leaders already know how to transition and probably do not need the help. The participant described the experience as day one showing up and signing all the necessary paperwork, and getting his photo taken. Then it was attending mandatory training, and for him, that was the onboarding and formal training. One participant said “*it was very minimal*” with her onboarding. Her onboarding process entailed her supervisor being available

to answer questions, having a few pre-meetings scheduled with other managers in the first couple of weeks but after that, she was on her own. Another participant noted that her company was essentially a startup so “*there was very little to no onboarding*” in place for her. She believed it was due to their lack of staff capacity and the company’s onboarding processes were being built during her transition.

A participant stated her onboarding experience as having a staff being assigned to assist her as the Chief Executive Officer. She noted “*it was more like, here is access to technology and the security code. Yeah, that’s about it.*” Another participant mentioned that before her first day, the Chief Executive Officer held a leadership retreat for senior leaders in their company and invited her to participate in that meeting as a part of her onboarding process. She commented the retreat was particularly helpful for her before formally beginning the position in getting to know the leaders in their company. Moreover, the meeting allowed the leaders a chance to know her before her first day. She also reported that the CEO invited her to a separate meeting with the leaders to ensure she felt welcomed on their team.

A participant described her onboarding experience as having the company’s Chief Marketing Officer and another women leader reaching out to connect with her at the beginning of the transition process. Both of the women welcomed her and offered to support her as much as she needed since their company was predominately men. Another participant in the study reported that there was not a lot in place for onboarding besides having one of his direct reports being available to answer questions during the transition process.

Sub-theme 2.2: Orientation Experience: “Orientation is the process of bringing employees up to speed on organizational policies, job roles and responsibilities and other organizational attributes and concepts that will help them transition efficiently into the position,” according to HR Zone. The objective of orientation is to “provide a genuine welcome, develop positive perceptions about the organization, confirm the employee’s decision to join the organization, teach basic fundamentals each

new employee should know, provide a basis for training, and put the employee at ease” according to Cadwell (1988).

The majority of participants stated their companies offered a general company orientation for new employees but did not have an orientation designed for new leaders. Most study participants described their general orientation process as having their supervisors or an assigned staff show them their office space. They also met with HR to complete paperwork, but that was primarily their orientation with nothing else available. A participant indicated “*there was no formal or even informal orientation or training*” for her. Another participant said that her company offered an orientation, but she has never attended the activity due to the timing conflicting with her other meetings. With that, she does not plan to attend the orientation at this point.

Three study participants stated attending their company’s orientations and commented that the orientation information was primarily an overview of their company but nothing specific for their roles. One of the participants described their corporate orientation as “*frighten*” and described it as, “*The first day I got there was literally like I almost didn’t stay because it was such a shock to be in a room with a number of very young, brand new folks in a room watching terribly produced boarding videos about IT, security and corporate culture. It was sort of an enthusiasm deadening corporate things.*” Another participant stated that their orientation was focused on the standard HR and mandatory training topics, including setting up their technology.

Participants also described their orientation experience as meeting with their supervisors and HR and attending team meetings to learn about the company, including one-on-one sessions with colleagues from across the organization. One participant mentioned that she met with a few of their board members during the initial onboarding process but nothing else with them after the initial meetings. Another participant reported that her administrative assistant coordinated some initial one-on-one meetings with

her direct reports. A participant commented that she contacted one of the interview panelists after beginning her job to learn more about the person's professional background and get to know her better. However, it was something the participant did on her own and was not something the company implemented.

Sub-theme 2.3: Training Experience: The majority of participants reported there was no training provided for them. One participant stated, *"zero training and it was all on the job."* Another participant received a two-week training to learn about the logistics of the role with a contractor that was hired to help her set up after she joined the company. A participant commented that he attended a mandatory HR training, but no formal training was provided. Also, another participant described her experience as no onboarding or training and no communications about her transition into the Executive Director role. She felt it was a sign of disrespect from her Board Chair about her transition into the role. One participant described his experience as, *"It was, day one showing up and signing all of the necessary HR paperwork such as your I-9 and badge photo taken and all that good stuff. There was a mandatory required training"* and after that, he had to schedule meetings with other leaders on his own for introduction. During those meetings, the participant asked questions such as *"What do you do? What does your division do? How does your division plug into the larger agency?"* From there, it was going through the agency's website, reading as much as he could about their programs, and asking a lot of questions, which he felt took much longer to feel comfortable asking his colleagues since *"you don't want to be like that person."* Hence, a lot of the knowledge about the agency and what they do were things he had "hunted" for on his own. One participant said, *"There was no formal or even informal orientation or training. Onboarding for me was just stepping into all the meetings, stepping into the cadence of the work, and asking questions."* Another participant said, *"I don't know if I had a well-thought out documented strategy. It was flying at the seat of my pants."* One of the participants also

mentioned that training was “*very minimal,*” but she was able to gain information and support by her supervisor, the predecessor, and some of the major stakeholders she worked with outside of their company.

Theme Three-On the Job Experience

Study participants discussed their transition experience on the job as having to navigate the company's culture without a clear roadmap or structured support systems in place. These things impacted their learning plans, confidence, and successes.

Sub-theme 3.1: Assumed Expectations: After being hired, participants commented that they learned about expectations for their new roles based on assumptions, but nothing that was explicitly laid out for them. Most participants noted they were not provided with clear expectations by their supervisors or the company during the transition process, especially for participants that stepped into newly created roles. The participants also commented that their assumptions about the expectations came from the information gathered during the interviewing process during the recruiting period or feedback indirectly from their supervisors or predecessors.

A participant noted learning about his expectations from the initial HR training, but assumed the rest based on his previous work experience. He said, “*beyond that, I would say a lot of it was things that I just assumed coming from others and from my previous work. A lot of that was just things I assumed we would be expected to do.*” The participant also stated he consistently requested feedback about his role and expectations from his supervisor during their one-on-one meetings, “*I want to make sure that my work is meeting his expectations.*” Another participant reported never receiving expectations, but developed a plan based on her supervisor's information and conversations. However, after 30 days into

her plan, *"there were all these other pieces that I didn't even know about. I didn't know about the global agents, and I didn't know about the external partners."*

A participant commented that her supervisor provided some expectations and allowed her to have complete autonomy in the position. However, she stated that other senior leader colleagues did not have expectations of her. Another participant said, *"figuring out expectations is still ongoing"* nearly two years later and four different bosses. Yet, one more participant stated that since she was not provided with any expectations, she provided the organization with her expectations in the role instead. She created a six-month plan and offered that to her supervisor and their board. She used the existing strategic plan to guide the development of her six months plan and stated, *"It's impossible to show up on the first day and say, here's where I think we should go."*

Most study participants also described their experience after being hired as having to deal with significant pressure to perform during the transition process. They felt urgency immediately to hit the ground running. They expressed feeling extreme pressure to achieve and demonstrate immediate execution of goals even though their company did not overtly state that message. However, most participants felt the tension internally based on the information assembled during the interviewing process and after diagnosing their situation upon arrival. However, a participant commented that the company was *"disorganized,"* since no one could help her do the job. Regardless, she said, *"I was just under the gun and on such a short time crunch to make such a visible difference and have such a big impact. It's like I had to pull out all the stops."*

Sub-theme 3.2: Navigating the New Culture: Most participants described that navigating the company culture and the inner working of their companies were challenging, even though most people were generally very nice. Participants commented that engaging and leading in the organization's new culture was highly complicated.

Most participants discussed confronting challenges with the company's culture, morale issues, dissatisfied employees, and a toxic work environment. They faced challenges with employee distrust issues, dealing with people that had "battle scars" from the previous leader, dealing with staff feeling beaten down, and working with staff that faced credibility issues within their company and with stakeholders externally. Furthermore, participants commented that folks on the inside protected themselves by not sharing any information with them during the transition process. This included some board members that withheld information from the participant and were not welcoming to them.

Some participants conveyed challenges with the volume of team issues they had to address once they started such as having staff feeling traumatized or others that had no trust for the new leaders. In addition, it was difficult for some participants to be accepted by colleagues as they had close bonds with the incumbents making it difficult to establish rapport and relationships. One participant described their experience as, *"It wasn't like we wanted to help you get started on day one."* Another person commented being shocked by the company's culture. A participant also described navigating the culture as *"ruffling a lot of feathers, graciously"* and like *"A politician. I was trying to be so diplomatic and meet the stated goals as I understood it, like the demands and objectives that my boss had laid out for me in these quick conversations- OK, real quick, just having to explain myself and trying to really default to a lot of probing questions, trying to just get to know people, understand where they were coming from, understand what their project was, and what they are passionate about it. And sometimes just hoping the*

hour ended soon." One participant stated, *"it was like an obstacle course and not having enough information."* Moreover, she noted, *"It's like an onion. When you start peeling back the layers, you're like, wow, this thing is real. It's like those onions where you cut into it, and you're like, oh my god, it's so strong. It's been my experience every other day."* A participant commented that *"the culture is really hard,"* due to some failed leadership previously where people were frustrated with the leadership, which made it especially challenging in that environment. Another participant reported their board's structure was a mess, which made navigating difficult once he was on the job. Yet, another participant explained that figuring out their company's culture was extremely difficult coming in as a new leader of color in a primarily white organization. She noted feeling that many colleagues purposely withheld information, which created significant problems to obtain the information she needed to perform their job. Their unwelcome behaviors also created significant self-doubt and isolation for the participant, where she had to figure out information and navigate the culture independently without much support. The participant expressed having to prove herself to colleagues consistently and stated, *"It wasn't just about the work. It impacts your morale. It impacts your confidence level because no one's reaching out to say, hey, let me be helpful and share this information with you. They were friendly enough when you would approach them, but again, you knew that they weren't sharing what they could have."* Another participant shared that as a leader of color, depending on the industry, support looks different for leaders of color, and perhaps others would be waiting for them to screw up rather than to support them. This participant noted that *"It's only lately that have I noticed more funny things, but I'll get asked to do things. And I'm like, do they really want me to do that, or is it because they just want a person of color to do it. There were a few of those things."*

Study participants noted that trying to distinguish critical stakeholders in their companies during the transition process was another obstacle they encountered. Some participants shared that they were taking in so much information during the transition process, which made figuring out the key players in their companies a challenge with their lack of time and unstructured onboarding process along with having to deal with other more urgent issues all at the same time. A participant said, *"I can't even figure out who's in this division. They've got seven different job titles for salespeople doing the same thing."* Another person mentioned that it was hard figuring out who does what since there was no organizational chart available due to their large company size.

Participants that transitioned into newly created roles commented facing pushback from their colleagues as they navigated the new company culture due to their position not being clearly defined or communicated across the company. Participants described that colleagues did not fully understand their role or know how their role fit into the larger organization structure. This lack of unclarity created feelings of competition or fear that work was being duplicated between the new leaders and their colleagues and perhaps battling for the same customers.

Many of the participants discussed difficulty building relationships with their team, colleagues, or external partners during the transition process, mainly due to their bandwidth and having to manage multiple crises simultaneously, especially participants that joined the company during the pandemic. Participants who transitioned during the pandemic described encountering extreme challenges establishing relationships virtually. Other participants explained facing difficulty of persuading people to achieve common goals since many of them were also having to handle multiple crises and priorities. Some participants commented their strategies to establish relationships included carefully

drafting communications plans and being mindful about their messaging approach. Others used methods such as having individual meetings with leaders across the organization to learn about their work.

Participants also mentioned encountering many different "egos" during the transition process and did not realize the depth of issues inside their teams or the organization from what they were told during the recruiting and hiring process. This caused challenges for participants to navigate their company's culture. One participant commented, *"I don't think the transition has really worked, to be honest with you. Because we started doing all the CARES Act. I stepped into that and stepped into the commitment of moving millions of dollars without really having any systems in place to do so. When you combine the lack of systems and processes in place and staff who do not like each other at all and go from the end of April until November 25th, it continues to be extremely problematic. It has not allowed me to learn. The other thing that is challenging is the systems in terms of documenting work or the culture piece."* On top of this, the participant explained that staff turnover and team conflicts added complication to the situation she needed to address during the transition process.

Most participants reported that asking questions was one of their primary strategies for navigating the new culture and learning about it. One participant stated that *"I had asked enough questions, and I knew it wasn't great. I didn't know how deep the wounds were, though. I mean literally, people have PTSD or some kind of like trauma. It's really bad. There were people that literally and I tried to be very cautious. The other things that were most of the problems were the leadership was not very present. They weren't very engaged. They didn't communicate very well,*

and there were a lot of inconsistencies between teams, so those were my first things I wanted to work on."

Participants indicated that establishing relationships and setting the right leadership presence in their new environment was another key approach for how they navigated the new culture. One participant said, *"Part of it is making sure I have strong relationships that I was talking to folks. I was listening and would say the other thing is trying to pull and leverage people's strengths, which was a big piece of it. I'm somebody who then starts to put that into action, and I'm a planner. Whether it's a program or it's taking this strategic plan and putting it into action. Whether it's, you know, collaborative partnerships, I've got that skill set and what I've done is really then as others come on is we've got tools that we use for that. Then how it's being able to walk through it with others. In that, they've got the ability to help create a culture of taking visionary ideas and putting them into action and executing some of the products that we need. Some of that is where we bring in training, but some of it is really being able to map out steps and then executing those steps and creating a climate of learning in which people are learning while doing."* Another participant said, *"One of the things I did as a strategy when I started was convening a leadership team. It had not been there, and there was no sense of shared leadership in its history ever. The other thing that I have been looking at is our organizational culture plan. How do we get to a place where people trust working together and trust one another? Figuring out how to work together? You don't have to like everybody, but you have to work with them, and you have to be respectful. So, I have been thinking through what that could look like in 2021. There's going to be a staff retreat. The most basic thing I did when I started was create a space for staff to get to know each other during our staff meetings, which they felt were a waste of time and only a platform or forum for people to give updates. So, when I came in, I was like most of us still haven't met in person, so let's just get to*

know each other. Let's talk about our favorite songs or who is your favorite musician, and people had fun with it. I was trying to bring some humanity in during times we gathered. It was those small things around human connections when people feel most valued." Yet another participant said, *"One, even before I began the earliest stages of the listening campaign and even though the hiring process-one thing I should note is the other kind of components to it is that again by coincidence when they began the hiring process for me what ultimately led to me, they also brought on a consultant to be an Interim Executive Director to get the organization running in some way because you can't be without an ED for that long when they had already gone six months. They brought in a guy. He was the person who originally hired me into the Mayor's office. I worked with him, and I consulted with him a little bit through the hiring process. He was also on the hiring committee, and he was very open to saying, you know, whatever you want to know, I'll tell you. So, I had a sense going in that things were bad, and his insight was just invaluable. Because I immediately had someone who had been there for a couple of months, whose insight I trusted, who was a consultant, so he's really good about going into a situation and very quickly ascertaining what the issues are, and so that helped me. I think it ended up being a lot worse than I knew, but I had a good sense going into it that things were not in a good place. So, the two things that I wanted to project- was that I was different from my prior predecessor, who I gathered really left in not a good place. I wanted to make sure that I communicated that I understood the situation the organization was in and that I was different. Then I would talk about what that was and that my leadership style is inclusive, it's engaging. I talked a lot about the two principles that I hold dear; it's respect and mutual accountability, in a pretty non-hierarchical inclusive way."*

Sub-theme 3.3: Confidence: The majority of study participants noted transitioning into a new job and company impacted their confidence during the transition process. A few of the participants commented being apprehensive about their responsibilities as the primary leader accountable for their companies' financial outcomes and successes. Others described feeling stressed with the type of responsibilities they were accountable for in their roles as they wanted to positively contribute to the company.

Participants shared that coming into the industry with minimal knowledge about the subject matter created a huge learning curve for them during the transition process. Some commented fearing their lack of industry knowledge would negatively impact their ability to succeed in the role even though they were successful in their previous jobs or they could be potentially rejected by their teams or colleagues. A participant said, *"I had utter lack of knowledge about the industry. I know sales. I know training and assessment. I know how to build programs quickly and efficiently? There's a lot I know, but that "gaping hole" was almost like a "gaping wound."* Another participant stated that she was fearful of messing up. One participant expressed being treated disrespectfully by the board chair due to her age which impacted her confidence. She felt pressured to consistently demonstrate that she was the right leader for the role. Other participants commented trying to fit in and being accepted by insiders without being vulnerable was top of mind for them during the transition process.

Participants described feeling apprehension, self-doubt and held back their emotions, including saying too much in the early stages of their transition process navigating relationships in the new culture. Participants commented about their fear of failure or making mistakes was high during the transition process. Many also shared that fitting in and being accepted by their peers and colleagues was a top priority for doing well in the new environment.

Many participants discussed their self-doubt, confidence, and internal struggles to be accepted by insiders, which was triggered by the treatment from their colleagues and expectations to do well in the new role, especially the leaders of color participants. One participant highlighted the treatment was extremely difficult as she desperately wanted to fit into the new culture and wanted others' approval of her. Another leader of color described high levels of frustration earning trust with colleagues while being treated disrespectfully from insiders.

Participants also stated that their previous experience from the last company affected their confidence during the transition process. One participant said, "You can only do your job when you feel like you're fully vested and you're comfortable doing it." Another participant mentioned, "how much risk am I willing to take, and at what point," as she navigated the new environment and with the expectations for the role she took on.

Sub-theme 3.4: Learning Plan: Participants described acquiring the needed knowledge to perform their jobs through self-directed plans. Most individuals did not have structured support systems in place during the transition process. Participants mentioned that getting up to speed and navigating the new company was done primarily on their own, including having to figure out who to speak and work with for obtaining the needed information.

Participants commented that their companies prepared initial meetings with colleagues, key stakeholders, board members, and team members. However, they were left on their own with minimal guidance for getting up to speed in the new environment during the transition process. They explained that their companies did not provide formal or structured onboarding or training plans to help them get up to speed during the transition process. One participant noted that learning was "flying at the seat of my pants." Another participant commented that it was "having

to learn by trial by fire." A participant also said he had to learn and hunt for information primarily by reading their website, reports and talking with people he thought would be helpful.

Participants indicated that their learning plans were reliant on their supervisors, colleagues, and team members to answer their questions. However, they were not provide with any clear roadmap or structured support. One participant stated, *"It was HR, IT, and then really it was just me talking with my direct manager. Hearing her thoughts and guidance and what she suggested I do and pairing that with my thoughts of what I should do and coming up with a plan. I did reach out to, again self-directed and informed by my manager, and supported by my manager. I think there are a number of people within the foundation, VP's, who was on the review committee for my role, and they had met me and have what each or most of them had shared. They had a personal vested interest to help me be successful, and I leaned into that. Having some of those one-on-one candid conversations scheduled throughout those first two months was something that I had done intentionally and periodically. Have that structured in the calendar for those conversations, but other than that, that was it. There wasn't much else there, just honestly learning by doing and observing. And navigating the toe in the water and see, which I know comes at a cost because things take more time. Also, I'm trying to read the situation. I'm trying to gauge what's the power dynamic here. How are these things typically done with the hierarchy of the culture? How they communicate, and then they're also grappling with, again, all these other contextual things that you know, as a state agency, you don't have a lot of resources available to you to delegate. And have other people working on it or having a budget comes in to help you support you in your work. There are a lot of people who are just juggling constantly, and so things take more time is also what I'm learning. And so, it's just constant learning, reflecting, giving things to try, and re-evaluating right. Re-evaluating what's realistic, how to go about this, and so there's a lot there, there's a lot there."*

Sub-theme 3.5: Support Experience: Study participants emphasized meeting with their supervisors and colleagues at the beginning of the transition process as their primary support system during the transition process. They also noted that after the initial hiring or general orientation, Human Resources (HR) was no longer involved in their transition process unless there were HR issues.

Participants said structured support programs outside of their company's general company orientation such as onboarding, training, mentoring, or coaching programs were not a provided during the transition process. One study participant stated, *"Support is a funny word because I really had to figure out on my own even though they provided training which was so disjointed and was a week-long over zoom."* Another participant commented that her support involved having overlapping time with the interim consultant and meeting with each board members. A participant also said *"I would say the single person that I probably have relied on the most outside of my immediate boss has actually been the Director for GR who she knows everybody. Literally, she is the connector, and she's also the one that I work very closely with on projects because they, I'm going to use the word-they own the relationships with governments. We are working with the government on the incentive sides, so we never walk into those meetings or those conversations without our governmental relations people. She was very instrumental in making the right connections and those introductions for me. In some instances, even actually convincing people as to why they need to or why they should be talking to me."*

One participant commented that aside from their supervisor and the initial HR meeting, no other support system was available to get her up to speed during the transition process. The participant commented, *"Honestly, besides that, not really, no. I don't mean to be rude about*

that, but the fact is that human resources have a particular function and duty. They can't, and they really don't know a lot of the business connections internally." Moreover, with the way their organization is structure and where he sits in the corporation, people in their different businesses do not feel obligated to say, *"Oh, we're going to introduce you to our business and all this, unless they really want something or they need something. Really, to be honest with you, there really wasn't anybody else that just openly said, "We're going to make sure you know everybody and stuff." That's not how it works, so I can see where others in different corporate functions may find it incredibly challenging if they don't have kind of that, that chaperone, or that connector."*

Participants commented that their supervisors played an essential role as key champions and thought partners to figure out initial strategies for executing their responsibilities during the transition process. They noted that having one-on-one meetings with their supervisor was also crucial in determining expectations for their roles and learning about the overall company, even though most did not receive explicit or clear expectations from their supervisors. However, participants stated that just having the time with their supervisors was valuable and particularly helpful for them emotionally for confidence and a chance to establish relationships with their supervisors. Moreover, the supervisors' direction and guidance were helpful as they dealt with multiple challenges or crises during the transition process.

Participants reported that colleagues played an imperative role in their transition process to learn about the company and gather the required information to accomplish their plans. Colleagues were important resources to answer participants' questions about the company, work processes, policies, learning about key stakeholders outside the company, and as a resource. Participants that received an

executive or onboarding coach also noted the support was beneficial for them during the transition process, especially for mental support and thought partners.

Many participants said having some type of an outside support system besides their colleagues and supervisors positively impacted their transition experience, mainly for the emotional support and strategy development. Outside supports such as spouses, friends, former colleagues, and networking groups were mentioned by participants. One participant said, *"I guess my main supporters would be the chamber. They want this partnership to work and said, you're going to make this work because their success is our success."* Participants also commented that having access to predecessors, or the incumbent as an outside helped them learn about the company's culture and ways to navigate the new environment effectively.

Sub-theme 3.6: Success and Early Wins: The majority of participants commented that about 5 to 8 months was the first time they beginning feeling confident in their roles. Participants reported feeling successful when they learned how to effectively navigate the company and were able to achieve small wins during the transition process. Participants also said that a part of feeling successful was having other individuals in their companies wanting to work for them during the transition process.

Participants described success in their new role as being able to manage crises effectively, achieving results rapidly, and making meaningful contributions to their team's outcomes and having productive team meetings. Other examples of successes participants noted included their ability to challenge current processes, policies, or procedures. One participant said, *"There comes a particular day, and it's usually around five or six months where you walk in, and*

you feel comfortable. You know what you're going to do that day, and it doesn't create this feeling of, how the hell am I going to answer that? How am I going to get this done? It was that particular day, and it was probably about six months in, where I was like, I know what I'm doing. I know who I need to talk to, and I still have my days where I'm like, geez, what do I need to do here, but it's not the same. I feel part of the organization where there came a point where I also realized or felt like, oh, I'm not being viewed as the new guy now. People aren't looking at me, going, Who is that guy? People are like, Oh, that's the participant. He's sitting over there. But I think there's this point in my own psyche, where you walk in that door that day, and you're like, OK, yeah, I get this, and for some people, they never get that. Some people, it could be the second week on the job. For me, yeah, it's usually about month five, which I think is pretty normal. People tend to in brand new positions. They don't really feel comfortable with what they're doing for several months. It depends on the complexity of the job, but I've felt like in most career changes, it took five or six months. If I was still feeling unsettled right now, it would be a very bad situation."

Another participant said launching a new system during the pandemic and making rapid changes within the agency were signs of success for her. She noted the operational accomplishments of health and safety during the pandemic was also success during her transition. Another participant described her success by saying, *"I've been in a couple of conversations, acting as the CEO in different venues. And it's in those moments where I feel like I'm not a "poser." I actually know how to do this job. I mean, I've got this bigger job, but success is a subjective word, and I don't know that it's been successful yet."* One more participant commented that his ability to turn their company's financial situation around and triage the company's toxic culture were tremendous success for him during the transition.

Theme Four: Transitioning From the Outside Challenges Experience

The challenges participants encountered during their transition included:

- Lacking industry knowledge
- Navigating the company's culture
- Dealing with multiple crises at the same time
- Lacking clarity about what success entailed in their new role
- Dealing with a lot of "newness" during the transition process

The challenges produced six sub-themes described below.

Sub-theme 4.1: Lack of Industry Knowledge: Participants commented that lacking the required subject matter expertise during the earlier stages of the transition process impacted their ability to resolve issues quickly that arose since they were new and did not always have the information needed on hand. This hindered their ability to make critical decisions without always consulting with others. It also created a significant learning curve for participants since there were no structured support systems to get them up to speed.

Participants emphasized feeling pressured to learn about the company, the entire industry, and identifying the key players in their field rapidly during the transition process. Moreover, participants expressed tremendous pressure to get up to speed with their learning plans to achieve results even though they did not receive much support or training.

Sub-theme 4.2: Company Culture: Participants said navigating the company's culture was challenging during their transition. Participants commented that it was difficult to figure out key players in the new organization due to the complexity of their business, field, culture, or the pandemic. This was particularly true for participants that joined large companies. Furthermore,

navigating the culture was hard for participants that had vital players in their company or teams with the institutional knowledge leave as they transitioned into their roles.

Some participants expressed that navigating the new culture without fully understanding the company or team's history and dynamics were challenging. They said the different personalities they dealt with were not always easy. Many participants noted encountering unwelcome cultures, while they had to still try to fit into the culture, which was taxing and challenging personally and professionally for them during the transition process.

Sub-theme 4.3: Dealing with Multiple Crises: Many participants reported they transitioned into teams or companies that had toxic environments. They commented feeling overwhelmed and stressed about the conditions. Participants described feeling a great deal of responsibility to create change or turn things around, stepping into the unhealthy, dysfunctional, and traumatizing cultures. In addition, some participants explained that the toxic environment made it difficult to gain momentum for change or achieve their plans, especially for participants that faced situations where key players were leaving the company.

Some participants noted that dealing with financial crises and addressing racial equity were the most challenging parts of transitioning into their new roles. They mentioned feeling challenged as they did not always have the support or tools needed to resolve those issues.

Participants said that dealing with multiple or compounding crises concurrently without the proper infrastructure, resources, tools, and processes was particularly difficult during the transition. Participants reported feeling extreme pressure to perform or make immediate contributions and felt an

urgent need to fix problems even though they did not have the necessary knowledge to solve the issues during the transition process.

During the pandemic, the participants noted that working from home was challenging to establish relationships with their teams and external stakeholders. Moreover, they had to virtually address isolation and mental health concerns, making it even more complicated during their transition since they did not know their teams or the company well. Participants said it was tough dealing with the pandemic and the compounding crises at work and home.

Sub-theme 4.4: Dealing with the compounding "newness" of things: Participants described that dealing with the compounding "newness" of things simultaneously was specifically challenging during the transition process. Examples of the concurrent things participants encountered during their transition included going or managing a small team to a larger group or division, switching from being a manager to being an individual contributor, changing from being a chief executive to a lower level leadership with less decision-making authority, switching from reporting to a supervisor to an entire board or several people, shift from a local company to a state, national, or international company, changing from being a consultant to having a supervisor, moving from one industry to another, switching from working in an office setting to a remote work environment and dealing with the pandemic. One of the participants described that representing her new company to an external stakeholder group was difficult in the early transition process since she was new to the industry. Another participant discussed the disrespected behavior she received jumping into her role and was not being taken seriously by her new supervisor and other board members. Participants expressed that managing all of the changes made their transition difficult while they were trying to make immediate impact in

their new positions. They also commented on the high level of stress dealing with their family along with the mental health concerns during the pandemic were particularly challenging.

Most participants mentioned that having to "re-learn" how everything works in a new job and company was demanding on them during the transition process. The stress added for participants that also switched to different industries. Moreover, the expectations of making an immediate change in a new environment were challenging with the volume of things participants needed to know and learn about in a short timeframe. According to participants, this was even more challenging since there was not much support in place for them and dealing with the multiple crises they needed to manage while getting up to speed. Furthermore, participants stated trying to fit into the new culture and company, learning new dress codes or norms, shifting industries, figuring out industry standards, and having a new supervisor or reporting structures during the transition made their transition tricky.

Participants indicated dealing with their confidence was another challenge they experienced transitioning into their new positions. Women and participants of color, particularly, commented about their confidence. One participant stated, "Being a BIPOC leader in a white institution is very challenging." The participants said repeatedly proving themselves and feeling as though they were not "good enough" made the transition exhausting and challenging. In addition, participants commented that the most significant challenging part of their transition was not feeling valued or welcomed by insiders.

Sub-theme 4.5: Lack of Structured Support: Participants commented that not having structured support systems for onboarding, training, coaching, mentoring, or extra help and overlapping assistance while trying to get up to speed and making good decisions during the transition was difficult. Participants also shared that it was incredibly challenging to deal with multiple crises while having to

figure things out independently without sufficient support or proper infrastructure and operations in place.

Theme Five-Desired Support by New Leader

An emerging theme that arose from participants was related to the desired support needed during the transition process. The theme developed three sub-themes: a structured support system, training, and tailoring support to match the new leader's situation.

Sub-theme 5.1: Structured Support System: Participants stated having a specific onboarding plan would have been helpful for their transition process to get up to speed more effectively. The onboarding plan suggested by participants included having consistent meetings with supervisors throughout the transition, not only at the beginning of their process. Other recommendations included having supervisors or board members actively engaged in the participants' transition process the first few years beginning with creating a more welcoming environment for participants early in the process.

Sub-theme 5.2: Training Plan: Participants commented that having a tailored training plan to help them learn the details of their job and responsibilities would be valuable for understanding the information needed more speedily. The training would be beneficial since participants deal with multiple crises the minute they arrive on the job. Participants also expressed that the company should provide guides such as written manuals, reports, documents on policies, procedures, checklists, and have intentional processes to help them get up to speed quickly rather than having them hunt for information independently. The training support would also help them navigate the company more rapidly and efficiently.

Sub-theme 5.3: Provide Tailored Support to Match the New Leader's Situation:

Participants suggested that companies be more planful when new leaders are brought into their companies since they have to make critical decisions when they arrive on the job and deal with multiple issues simultaneously. Therefore, if they are not provided with sufficient support systems to ensure the person can achieve the goals desired by the company, that can significantly impact the person's chances of being successful in the role. Examples participants provided included if companies bring in new leaders during the budgeting season, after the company is sold, if the company faces a significant financial crisis or is dealing with employees experiencing traumas, the company should provide enough context and be transparent with candidates during the interviewing process for them to prepare adequately for the job. However, once the person is hired, participants stated that the company should implement relevant support based on the situation to ensure the person can effectively do their job and make the impact their company needs rather than letting the new leader sink or swim by figuring out things on their own with so much to learn during the transition. The help would also allow the new leader to align their resources appropriately and balance the multiple priorities to execute their plans more productively.

Participants shared that companies should customize the support provided for new leaders and explicitly lay out their expectations for the first three, six, nine, year, or 18 months to give them the best chance to achieve their goals without assuming what the expectations are. Participants outlined things that included having a dedicated "go-to" person or team assigned to help the new leader learn and navigate the culture rapidly and efficiently. Other supports include having a buddy system in place and access to an external support system from outside their organization for insights. The go-to people on the inside could provide specific information about the company's culture, including identifying key

stakeholders to establish relationships with, navigating the culture and processes efficiently, and understanding where potential landmines could be for the new leader during the transition process. The external support could include industry experts or customers, networking groups, and individuals with the same roles in different companies acting as the new leader's sounding board. Moreover, participants stated that having an insider coach who knows the company and industry would help the new leader close the learning gap about the industry. This person can also help advocate for the new leader to influence others to establish key relationships and provide historical knowledge for the new leaders to speed more rapidly.

Participants strongly suggested that companies clarify what they expect from a new leader and define what success looks like by creating a clear roadmap in partnership with the new leader during the transition process since they take in so much information when they join the company. The roadmap should entail clear goals, expectations, and support to achieve the role's intended purposes. In addition, the roadmap should be transparent about the internal and external support available to help the new leader to meet their goals, such as mentors, sponsors, coaches, connectors, and network groups. This type of roadmap would help a new leader navigate the company's culture, gain industry knowledge more rapidly, feel a sense of belonging and fit in their new environment, and access key decision-makers when needed to increase the leader's chances of success during the transition process.

Themes from Colleague Study Participants

Below is the list of themes and sub-themes for quick references from the colleague study participants.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTIONS
THEME ONE	Colleague's Role in the Transition Process
1.1	Helping the New Leaders Navigate the Internal Systems
1.2	Assisting New Leaders' Learning Plans
1.3	Supporting New Leaders
THEME TWO	Facilitation of the Transition Process
THEME THREE	Challenges Observed by New Leaders
3.1	Dealing with Multiple Crises
3.2	Navigating Company Cultures
3.3	Dealing with the multiple "newness" of things
THEME FOUR	Support Needed for New Leaders
4.1	Clear Expectations
4.2	Provide Structured Support

Theme One: Colleagues' role in the Transition Process

One of the themes that emerged for study participants was related to their participation in the new leader's transition process. Participants described how they supported the new leader, which led to three sub-themes about their roles helping the new leader navigate, assisting with their learning plans, and general support.

Sub-theme 1.1: Helping new leaders navigate the internal systems: Most participants commented that their role in the new leader's transition process was helping the person to navigate the company's internal systems, processes, policies, teams, customers, and connecting them to the right resources. Participants stated guiding new leaders by directing them to resources and introducing them to their colleagues and team members during meetings. Participants also mentioned a key role they had was welcoming the new leader into their company and answering questions as they come up during the

transition process. One participant said, *"I'm helping her navigate the place and the big picture macro philanthropy side, that is directly for my boss. Because he will be our pitchman for that big money, she's working directly with him on some of that. I need her to look good with him, and it's going well."* Another participant said, *"My role was just bringing him up to speed on my realm of work and the history of the organization. Since we had been at a period of pretty challenging racial equity stuff that was front and center of what needed to happen. So, I spent some time talking to him about that, but he figured it out mostly on his own."* Another participant mentioned, *"My role in the transition process since we're both new here. I had a little bit of a leg up in understanding what those onboarding processes are and was able to get the person on board and caught up with what I had learned in my short amount of time within the organization. So, we work pretty closely together through that process, just sharing knowledge and getting each other up to speed on what we needed to know, the fundamentals of the role, the fundamentals of the company, and network building. A lot of our role is connecting with other members of the organization broadly, both from a corporate perspective and then within our businesses. I had started some of that groundwork, and together, we were able to flush out that stakeholder map throughout the organization."*

Sub-theme 1.2: Assisting new leaders' learning plan: Participants reported their role was supporting the new leader to obtain the information needed for them to get up to speed with their learning to do their jobs. This also included providing data, reports, or information on policies, procedures and customers to the person. Participants commented giving and sharing information with new leaders about their company's programs, products, services, funding streams, and operational materials for their new leader. They also commented connecting the

new leader with the necessary resources and helping them to find the right people for information. Some participants said they took time to develop informational sheets or binders to support the new leader.

One participant stated, *"I was tasked with getting a lot of summary information, pages of the department's funding stream, the breakdown of different programs, and being able to create a binder of resources of definitions to look at when she hears different acronyms. I touched base with her a couple of times, really helped coordinated and organized if she wanted to."* Another participant noted, *"My specific role was about the engagement that we had that did not overlap, how it was funded, the details about the partners, the program, the outcomes, and any other engagements that we had that she may not have been familiar with. We talked about the funding streams that impacted the work because she would not have necessarily been familiar with those either."*

Sub-theme 1.3: Supporting new leaders: Participants described their role as being a general support for new leaders during the transition process. However, participants emphasized that they did not have an assigned or formal role assigned by the company to support the new leader during the transition process. One participant described her role as, *"My role always seems a little bit like herding cats. Luckily, we prepare for board turnover. We have a physical binder that we still print out and give to a new board member or a new leader in the organization, the Handbook, the loan policy. Then a whole list of things that they ought to know, so we started working through those. I tried to, but I'm not sure I succeeded say these three topics are actually this process. Let's talk about the process rather than the excruciating detail of how you calculate a tax credit allocation to someone."* Another participant termed his role as *"I am his coach, which does have a formal connotation to it within our firm as we think about trying to help people find and build their inspired careers inside our firm. That's one of the roles that I play as a coach. I play a role as his formal coach, which again is really about helping him*

build his career and help him navigate the firm in different decisions he might encounter. I would also describe myself as an advocate. I'm sort of in that role as a coach. I also view him very much as a thought partner. I think we have a mutual kind of thought partner relationship that could apply to things we're thinking about or working on or doing internally for a firm or in a client setting or thinking about broader ways in which we want to have some impact out in typically the nonprofit industry and field that you know that we spend time working in. So that's how I think about my relationship."

Some participants said their role was being the person who transfers knowledge to the new leader and partners with them to gain more knowledge needed by the new leader. One participant noted calling the new leader before she started to welcome her into their company and provided advice about ways she can be successful in their company since it was primarily a male-dominant culture. She wanted to ensure the new leader felt supported.

Participants also described assisting new leaders with their strategic plans as needed by being a thought partner for them. They also provided information about their company's situation and who to approach on the inside to achieve the new leader or company's goals. A participant said, *"I was the brain dump person. I think my role is and was the conduit to what originally was there."* In addition, the participant mentioned playing the role of being a gut check on the brand voice and tone, along with how they talk, what they look like, and what they say to the outside world for the new leader.

The majority of participants who were peers or direct reports to the new leaders commented that they did not know specifically how to support their new leaders. Participants

shared that they did not have assigned roles by the company to support the new leader. They also commented that they were not provided with any type of tools, resources, or directions by the company or human resources on how to support the new leader. Therefore, participants said they were not always sure how to effectively support the person and did the best they could base on what they assumed the new leader needed.

Several participants stated there was no preparation time for them to properly help their new leader transition into their companies based on their perspectives. Additionally, some participants reported their company lacked a coherent strategy for recruiting, hiring and supporting new leaders due to their lack of infrastructure or processes. One of the participants said there was no training or onboarding available for the new leader. Therefore, she assumed others were supporting the new leader, but was not 100 percent sure. Another participant stated that supporting the new leader was overshadowed by the pandemic and the crises of that which needed to be dealt with internally and externally. She also said there was no plan for helping their new leader since they had no idea what she needed and did not have the capacity to support her. However, most participants revealed they had never thought about their specific role in the new leader's transition process before the interview with the researcher.

Theme 2: Facilitation of the Transition Process

A theme that emerged from the study participants was their organization's facilitation of the transition process for their new leader. Most participants described facilitating the transition process as connecting the person with resources and different people inside their company. Participants also explained that their transition process involved having the new leader tour their company, meet with

other key individuals, and set up their workspaces. According to participants, the new leaders were also linked with interim leaders, predecessors, incumbents, contractors, or others to learn about the company and gain perspectives as needed.

The majority of participants assumed the new leader's supervisor was responsible for supporting the person but did not know for certain. However, participants did not believe their company provided much structured support or success plans to assist their new leader as they made the transition into the new role and company. One participant said, *"HR had their onboarding with benefits and things like that, but there wasn't anything really immediate about the company, which is the stuff she'll be putting together, like-new hire training that type of thing, so no."* Another participant noted, *"As an organization, we've grown, we've done more and more to onboard new folks who come on board. The person's situation was pretty unique, though, because she was with a different organization, but they were housed in our space, so she leased space from us. So, she had a level of familiarity with the organization that no one else will have, but she was not as familiar with our processes. Her onboarding meant that she spent some time learning about the inner workings of the organization, but it wasn't as pure as the folks we've hired since she's come on board who have basically no understanding of the work that we do. They don't have relationships necessarily with the people that are on staff, and we spent time talking about the work that she would be ingrained in and the work that the rest of us were doing. The other vice presidents, CEO, and the admins and I spent time with her individually, bringing her up to speed at a high level on all of the things that we do organizationally. But at the same time, she was able to jump in and work, where most people have a knowledge gap that they have to learn a lot more before they can jump in and work. That's an advantage and a*

disadvantage because the advantage is you have someone who's ready, willing, and able who can jump right in and do the work. The disadvantage is there are some things that they may not have paid attention to on the front end that later you've assumed they know that could be to their detriment."

Study participants discussed helping the new leader obtain the needed knowledge or information to perform their role with training by providing a company orientation, onboarding training, or HR training. Participants commented that their companies offered materials to review and had colleagues or direct reports share their knowledge and provided an overview of their work with their new leader. One study participant discussed updating their company's policies to enable their new leader could achieve their objectives before the person's formal start date. Another participant stated having the new leader participate in different projects even though there was no formal onboarding plan. One of the participants said their company worked with a recruitment firm who provided an executive coach for the new leader. With that said, the participant said the recruitment firm did not prepare their internal team on the things needed to onboard their new Chief Operating Officer. Yet, another participant commented that their company exposed the new leader to different parts of their organization and industry to gain knowledge needed to help the new leader achieve their goals. One participant acknowledged that their company probably did a "crappy" job but was glad they could offer the new leader adequate technical support as she transitioned in their company.

Most participants described the transition process as having the new leader spend time with other leadership players inside their company. They also introduced the new leaders to their key players and resources, including scheduling those meetings. One participant commented their company provided the new leader with the "facts" and held discussions about those facts to get the her up to speed. Furthermore, they invited her to their leadership retreat before she starting in the role. Another

participant said, *"From a structure, systems, communications standpoint, those have evolved really significantly over the last several years. I mean, when we were smaller, it was much easier to build community in particular like as different sort of practice areas, have grown and developed, have warranted standing up on our own independently. We've just had to evolve continually, so I'd say, you know, the life industry or organizational structure that we do use to be able to accommodate that. We've got pretty good systems and tools around like team communication and frequency and sort of expectations around account accountability to help teams build a good rhythm that at least helps. I think if you do that well, it can help create the space to be able to actually focus on the substance in the relationship in that sense of belonging because you actually feel as though you've got the structure of the communication mechanisms and the systems that are going to allow you not to be overly consumed with those kinds of things."*

Theme Three: Challenges Observed by New Leaders

A theme that developed from the study participants was about challenges faced by the new leaders from their perspectives. The theme produced three sub-themes linked to dealing with multiple crises, navigating the company's culture, dealing with the "newness" of the transition, and clarity about new leaders' jobs.

Sub-theme 3.1 : Dealing with Multiple Crises: Participants stated one of the most notable challenges they observed for the new leader was dealing with multiple crises simultaneously as they transitioned into their roles. The new leaders faced challenges with the pandemic, pivoting their businesses and teams to remote work, and addressing how virtual work

would be implemented without much notice or proper infrastructure or operating structures in place. This is on top of new leaders dealing with concerns from staff and communities related to the civil unrest in their cities, mental well-being, and factors such as toxic work environments and staffing turnover. Other issues new leaders faced included the company's financial crisis and demands from their supervisors, teams, and customers.

Participants also commented that it was particularly challenging for new leaders to establish relationships in the new environment virtually without the normal face to face meetings that are more effective during the transition process. One participant described the challenge observed as *"just having to pivot because of Covid."* Another participant commented, *"I think it has just felt like one emergency or one crisis after another, and that seems to be challenging because they require all of her attention to put this fire out and put that fire out. I think what she would like is to be able to have more time to do some strategic planning and thinking about where the organization is going. We had completed the first half of the strategic planning with the thought that we would complete the second half after our new CEO started. I think that she has not been able to do that work yet for a number of reasons. Primarily because she has to deal with a lot of immediate short-term demands on her time. I think that's challenging for her not to feel like she can do some of the others, like external-facing works that CEOs normally do, building those relationships or things that I think in a normal year would have been on top of her list of things to do. Like, connect with our major funders, not with a request, but as an introduction. Build community relations and relationships, introducing herself in this new role to other people that she might have had with her network before. And sharing the new vision that she has and her leadership for the company. I feel that those are not things she has not been able to address early on in the start as she would have liked."* Another participant shared, *"I think the most challenging part is*

just coming in during all of this. It's coming in during a pandemic with a lot of uncertainty. The second thing is coming into a new role with lots of players at the table with personal connections or relationships with Gabe." One participant remarked, "Honestly, it's the physical distance with Covid. For us, it's really difficult not to address that, and I'm sure some leaders who may have different locations with people that they're not always face to face with, I think it feels like I have very limited time with her." Another also participant said, "All of the transitions that honestly happened in terms of staffing, all of the knowledge that I'd walked out the door, took some time to figure out how to do things. The HR function was done once the consultant was gone. The CFO left shortly after as we couldn't afford them, so we had to hire accountants. We hired an HR person. We didn't have a team doing advancement. The person who was doing communication was pretty new to their role. It was just a lot of gaps in critical agency infrastructure, HR, finance, communications, development. He had to move really quickly to hire and support a team of new people in those functions."

Sub-theme 3.2 : Navigating company cultures: Participants reported a key challenge for the new leader was adapting to their company's culture. Participants noted that new leaders faced scenarios where team members quit or left the company who had the most institutional knowledge. This added tremendous stress the leader in trying to stabilize their teams and the situations without further harming to the situation.

Participants also observed new leaders stepping into toxic team environments with constant changes, dealing with different personalities, building relationships when people were traumatized, and lacking trust for leaders, which created tremendous demands on the new leader during the transition process. In addition, participants commented that entering their cultures

where insiders had already built strong bonds between colleagues or groups created a very challenging situation for their new leader to establish relationships during the transition. A participant said, *"My guess would be the culture of the organization and being able to accomplish something through the culture that doesn't fit into an existing process."* Another participant noted, *"I think the most challenging would have been the personalities, which is true in any organization. She was put on the executive leadership team right away, and being able to feel comfortable in that space and learning the personalities and dealing with both the good parts of it and not so good parts of it. What she has done has shown her commitment and shown her trust, and more importantly, shown her work ethic. Because you can show up for the meeting and not be fully engaged, and it'll show up in your work. I can honestly say that she's a workhorse in our organization and has been since the day she's coming along."* Another participant said, *"Honestly, probably navigating the new landscape of knowing what's allowed and what's not. The procurement piece killed her. We still butt heads with the procurement piece. What do you mean? We have to do solicitation, and how long is that going to take? If we had more support navigating how we can collaborate in a new organization setting and the union piece, that's huge."*

Sub-theme 3.3 : Dealing with the multiple "newness" of things: Participants reported noticing their new leaders struggling with the industry's knowledge due to the complexity of their sector. Some participants stated their new leaders faced significant challenges not having enough industry knowledge coming into the role and not understanding their industry's landscape while having to make immediate decisions, including developing the necessary relationships to help their teams when needed.

Participants also explained that new leaders were struggling to balance and deal with a lot of "newness" at the same time. Participants provided examples such as being new to their company and industry, being in a newly created role in their company, and coming into a new position that the

company did not clearly define. Participants commented that this made it particularly challenging for the new leader to fit into the company and gain buy-in from people when no one in the company understood their scope of work and created confusion for participants and others to help the new leader effectively. The confusion or lack of clarity also caused uncertainty for participants. It also caused some insiders to lack trust or doubt about the new leader's responsibilities and goals, which may have impacted their ability to support the new leader.

Participants commented that their companies did not always have the infrastructure, resources, tools, capacity, or processes to help the new leader execute their goals. The gap caused much delay in the new leader's ability to achieve their goals in the timeframe they wanted or were expected to accomplish set by the company. Moreover, participants noted challenges of navigating their systems due to the complexity of their industries, the size of their companies, and their types of businesses for new leaders.

Theme Four: Supports Needed for New Leaders

A theme that emerged from study participants was related to supports they believed new leaders needed during the transition process. The theme led to two sub-themes.

Sub-theme 4.1: Clear Expectations: Study participants stated that their company's role in helping new leaders should be to ensure clear and realistic expectations are set and given for new leaders, including letting their teams know what those things are before the new leader's arrival. This is an essential element since many of them face multiple crises when they start their jobs during the transition period. Clear expectations should also entail a clear outline of the support available to assist new leaders, including defining the goals the new leader must reach and the timeline for it, outlining

who are primary people the new leader should work with internally and externally, and how the new leader will fit into their new company during the transition. Participants also commented that the company should be candid about its situation to help the person realistically set their plan for success, including providing sufficient help.

Sub-theme 4.2: Provide Structured Support Systems: Study participants suggested that their companies should design and implement specific training plans to help new leaders dive into their jobs swiftly and efficiently due to the complexity of their roles. This should involve training insiders before the new leader begins their job, especially their team members and colleagues, about different support arrangements to ensure they can perform well in their new role. The training should entail documented checklists the person needs to know or master, written processes, procedures, reports, manuals, policies, and historical background information. Furthermore, the training would involve people in different parts of the organization to speed up learning and bridge relationships.

Participants named that their company's role should be to help a new leader effectively navigate their culture and internal and external relationships as much as possible. Companies should help new leaders bridge connections internally and externally, especially when new leaders are new to their industry. These supports would help new leaders learn and establish critical relationships needed to succeed. The support would also allow new leaders to acquire historical knowledge about the company, to make better decisions during the transition process when there is so much to deal with and learn. Bridging relationships could cover helping the new leader identify critical people inside their companies and external individuals or stakeholders instead of letting the new leader doing it on their own during the transition process. The bridging component is critically important for new leaders who do not come from the industry is speeding up learning and navigating the new company efficiently.

Colleague participants said their companies should provide "overlapping support" for new leaders during the transition period, especially in the beginning to provide them time to evaluate the situation and learn about the company. The extra "pair of hands" and overlapping support would ensure the person has adequate time to learn about the company and situation without being pressured to make decisions during the transition process. It would also allow enough time to assess the circumstances and teams to speed up learning.

Parallel themes from the new leader and colleagues study participants

Three parallel themes came out from the interviews from both new leaders and colleagues study participants related to the overall complexity of the transition process. This included the lack of job clarity that new leaders received, the lack of support provided to new leaders, and new leaders faced compounding crises along with experiencing many newness of things at the same time.

Theme 1: Lack of clarity: Both new leader and colleague study participants mentioned that the onboarding process included meetings with HR and supervisors during the transition process for new leaders. The transition process entailed attending team meetings and having individuals and group meetings with colleagues. Most study participants reported having some general company orientation available in their companies. However, there was no specific orientation, onboarding, or training plans for new leader study participants.

Study participants mentioned that typical players involved in a new leader's transition process included: HR, supervisors, direct reports, and colleagues. Participants also cited HR and supervisors had a more direct impact on the new leader's transition experience and process.

However, most new leader study participants described their transition as messy, lacking structured support, and did not receive clarity about their roles and responsibilities, especially those that took on newly created positions in their company.

Theme 2: Lack of Support: Participants stated there was lacking support available for new leaders during the transition process. The majority of new leader participants said they did not receive structured support systems besides the four that worked with executive coaches. However, two organized additional outside support during the transition process. Supervisors and colleagues were the most accessible support systems at the beginning of the transition process for the new leaders. Though, the frequency of meetings with supervisors changed after the early stages of the new leaders' transition process.

Theme 3: Dealing with Multiple Crises and Newness of Things: Study participants reported a key challenge during the transition process for new leaders was dealing with the multiple and compounding crises during the transition process. Examples of situations included areas such as the company's financial concerns, the pandemic, the company's toxic work environment, dealing with traumatized team members, dysfunctional work environment, staff turnover, lacking the infrastructure to execute the company's goals, dealing with topics on racial equity. The company is being sold with layers of change while the new leader is new. However, participants noted the company's culture and the new leader's lack of industry knowledge were primary challenges for new leaders that come from the outside during the transition process.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore, document, and analyze an organization's role in a leadership transition process for individuals hired from outside into senior leadership roles. The aim was to examine who plays a role in their transition process and understand how organizations facilitated the transition process for new leaders. As a result, this study used a qualitative grounded theory method with a purposive, homogeneous sampling strategy to identify study participants to be interviewed by the researcher. Participants were identified through the researcher's professional network that involved individuals who met three criteria:

- The person was hired from the outside into a senior leadership position of director level or higher within the last two years from the researcher's interview with the new leader study participant.
- The new leader's status can be employed or unemployed at the time of the interview.
- The new leader must nominate at least one of their colleagues, such as a supervisor, board member, human resource, peer, or a direct report that was involved in their transition process to be interviewed by the researcher.

Based on the criteria and goal of this study, the researcher interviewed 28 study participants to examine the organization's role and answer the researcher's research question. The researcher used the interviews, memos, and journaling to develop the emerging themes in this chapter. The interviews led to multiple emerging themes that the researcher identified in this chapter about their transition experience. The themes described the new leader's transition experience entering a new company and taking on their leadership position. It also reported the colleague's role and how they understood their companies facilitated the transition process for the new leaders coming in from the outside.

Chapter V

This chapter summarizes the study with a discussion about the study's results and conclusion, including the implication for the transition process for new leaders that are hired from the outside into director level leadership positions. The chapter also identifies the study's limitations and recommendations for future research to better support new leaders that make transition into leadership positions.

Summary of the study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore, document, and analyze an organization's role in a leadership transition process for individuals that are hired from outside into senior leadership roles. The study used a grounded theory method with a purposive, homogeneous sampling strategy to identify and select study participants. The new leader study participants nominated one of their colleagues to also participate in this study. With purposive sampling, participants are selected with a purpose to represent a type of criterion and ensure relevance to the subject matters and ensure relevance to the subject matters where participants in each of the selected criteria have enough diversity, and the characteristics can be explored (Birks and Mills, 2005). Interviewing participants was the primary data collection method for this study. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) said, "the qualitative research interviews attempt to understand the world from the subject's points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world before scientific explanations."

The researcher aimed to explore the new leader study participants' lived experience transitioning into a new job and company, including who played a role in their transition process. On top of that, examining how the organization facilitated the transition process for the study participants.

The colleague study participants were interviewed to investigate their role in the new leader's transition process and explore how their company facilitated the transition process for new leader.

The researcher kept memos for each interview with study participants in a journal throughout the process. After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed by the researcher and sent to participants for members to check for accuracy, strengthening the study's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher used the constant comparative method to continuously comparison data to and against other data to look for themes (Creswell, 2005).

The researcher utilized the study's emergent themes to answer the research question about the organization's role in a new leader's transition process. The findings from this study can add knowledge to the existing body of research about leadership transition for organizations to effectively support new leaders who are hired from the outside into new leadership roles to increase their success with transitions.

Results and Discussion

Theme 1: Leadership Transition is Complicated: This study's findings support the existing research on leadership transition. The leadership transition process is complicated and taking on a new leadership position in a new company is incredibly difficult (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988; Watkins, 2003, Citrin & Neff, 2005). This study's data suggests that the transition process is messy, challenging, and overwhelming for individuals during the transition process. Moreover, the findings imply that new leaders encounter numerous crisis that requires their full attention and energy at the same time as they transition into the leadership position.

The study's findings also suggests that companies do not map a clear path for new leaders to succeed during the transition process. New leaders are essentially responsible and left on their own to

figure out the right path to navigate the new environment for information to perform their jobs with minimal structured support built into the transition process by the company. The participants in this study reported that their company did not offer formal onboarding, training, or structured support systems for them after being hired. The primary support system for the new leader is typically through individual meetings with supervisors, colleagues and direct reports to locate and receive information and resources. However, recruitment firms that hired new leaders provided them with additional transition support, such as an executive coach. Still, most participants in this study did not have one available as part of their transition process.

The participants in this study reported that their supervisors, colleagues, and direct reports who work inside the company played a significant role in their transition process. However, insiders were not always equipped or could support the new leaders due to their other responsibilities, capacity, and lacked understanding of what the new leader needed during the transition process.

Theme 2: The Company's Role in a New Leader's Transition Process: The study's findings imply that an organization's role is primarily recruiting and hiring the person but not necessarily assuring they can successfully make the transition into the role or company. This study's data infers that a new leader is solely responsible for their success during the transition process. In addition, the organization's work is done once the person is hired, which aligns well with the existing research on leadership transitions.

This study indicates that companies decide what leadership role they need or want and who to hire and transition into the position. However, they do not build structured support systems to help the person make a successful transition into the new role and company.

Theme 3: How Companies Facilitate the Transition Process for New Leaders:

Study participants commented that some initial HR or mandatory training and general company orientation were available for them after they started the job. However, none of those things were tailored for their role specifically. A few new leader study participants attended their company's orientation program and received executive coaches, but most did not participate in either of these opportunities.

Participants mentioned that their company had no formal check-in processes to determine their progress or discuss how things were going for them during the transition process. Supervisors were mainly available to answer questions when new leader study participants needed. However, they were primarily hands-off during the transition process. This finding supports the existing research that supervisors are not highly engaged, and some are unconcerned about helping new leaders to make the transition successful during the transition period (Elsner & Farrands, 2006).

The colleague study participants in the study commented that their companies facilitated the transition process by having the new leader meet with HR, colleagues and direct reports, setting up workspaces and equipment, attending a company orientation if available, providing company tours for new leaders, introducing the new leader to key stakeholders, and connecting new leaders to resources. However, most colleague participants were not entirely clear on their company's transition process for the new leaders. They also noted that they have not consider their role and how it impacts a new leader during the transition process before this study was conducted.

The study's findings imply that once a company decides to backfill a senior leadership role or modify an existing position, they hire the person directly or work with a recruiting firm. If the organization selects to work with a recruitment firm, a new leader receives an executive coach for

support during the transition process. However, if the company hires the new leader directly, companies do not offer an executive coach as part of their transition process.

The study's findings indicate that organizations offer minimal support to new leaders once they are hired. The results imply that companies generally offer a company orientation or mandatory training for new leaders during the transition process, including scheduling introduction meetings with key stakeholders. However, organizations do not offer specific orientation, onboarding, or training for new leaders at a director level based on this study's findings. They ensure new leaders are set up initially with the necessary equipment and connect them with colleagues and direct report, but minimal support after that. The primary support offered for a new leader is scheduled individual meetings with the individual's supervisor and colleagues.

The study's findings imply that new leaders are essentially responsible for developing their learning plans and getting up to speed in their new company independently, regardless of their experience. In addition, new leaders often encounter situations where the company lacks necessary infrastructure and processes to support their learning during the transition process. In some cases, the company has job-specific documentation available to help the new leader learn. However, they are primarily responsible for their learning plans and acquiring information by hunting for them individually without formal processes built into their transition process.

The study's findings suggest that HR, supervisors, colleagues, and direct reports play vital roles as key insiders involved in a new leader's transition process. HR plays a critical role in helping the hiring manager with the recruiting and hiring processes. They frequently meet with the new leader when they start the job and oversee the company's orientation program. However, the findings suggest that the HR role has primarily been related to compliance, even though they play an imperative role as one of the first people inside the company to welcome the new leader and often set the tone for their company's

culture. The findings from the new leader study participants hint that the company's orientation program is not adequately designed for new leaders at the director level and up, which can influence how a new leader feels about their fit in the company's culture. The results also indicate HR is not involved with a new leader after the initial HR processes, compliance training, or orientation in a new leader's transition process.

The study's findings imply that a new leader's supervisor is imperative in the new leader's transition process. They guide and equip the new leader with the support needed to build their confidence. They are thought partners for the new leader, especially those new to the industry, connecting them to people and resources. However, the data also hints that variables about a supervisor can also impact a new leader's ability to get up to speed rapid to increase their success in the new role. For example, if the supervisor is also new to the company or industry, they may not have enough knowledge to help the new leader navigate the company's culture, processes, and decision-makers within their company. If the supervisor does not have enough industry knowledge or know enough about the operations, the supervisor may also impact how quickly the new leader gains knowledge. Moreover, they may not be an effective thought partner for the new leader to develop their strategies or handle some of the challenges faced by a new leader during the transition process. This may also be complicated since the supervisor is encountering their own challenges with transition and may not have enough capacity or credibility in the company to remove barriers needed by the new leader. That may present challenges for the new leader in establishing the necessary relationships or information needed to perform their job or achieve their plan during the transition process.

The study's findings identified that a new leader's colleagues play an important role in the transition process. Colleagues are the go-to players for a new leader to acquire information about the company's history, decision-makers, culture, systems, processes, and procedures. Colleagues also

provides advice to new leaders about the inter-workings of the company, and become social support for new leaders. However, the data suggest that not all colleagues were helpful to the new leaders during the transition process.

Some colleague participants stated they could not support the new leaders due to their responsibilities or lack of knowledge about what the new leaders needed. One colleague study participant mentioned having to protect herself due to the nature of the leadership role, knowing that the person could change every few years. Another colleague commented that she had many other priorities to managed and was not accessible to the new leader as much as she wanted.

Some colleague participants reported they were not equipped to help the new leader since they were unaware of their specific role, responsibilities, or what the person needed to be successful. One colleague study participant was also new to the company, and their team was evolving. Therefore, she was still in the process of learning about the company, culture, industry, and expectations for their work. Another colleague participant stated, "it was the blind leading the blind."

The study's findings indicated that a new leader's direct reports play a crucial role in a new leader's transition process. The direct reports' emotional and mental capacity including their responsibilities and priorities impacted their ability to fully support the new leader. The team member study participants shared a few examples that influenced their ability to support their new leader such as: feeling traumatized or devalued, unclear about the person's responsibilities and expectations, and the pandemic.

The study's findings suggest that gaining approval from the new leader's colleagues, supervisors, and teams during the transition process was critically important for them to feel a sense of belonging and fit in the new culture. It considerably impacted their confidence and fear of failure in the new company.

The data also hint that new leader participants wanted to earn their colleagues, supervisors, and team's approval during the transition, especially in the earlier entry stage of the process.

The study's findings suggest that regardless of a new leader's leadership level in the company, such as a Chief Executive Officer or director, gaining the approval of others affected their confidence level and sense of fit in the new environment. However, the data showed extreme frustration by the new leader study participants as they worked to earn the approval of their supervisors and colleagues.

One new leader study participant commented that her supervisor utterly disrespected her regardless of how much she tried to establish the relationship. The participant felt that being a younger leader affected the adverse treatment she received from her new supervisor and colleagues. Another new leader participant said that her company was primarily "white," and colleagues intentionally withheld information from her, making the ability to get up to speed in the new company extremely difficult. The participant also expressed being purposely excluded from knowledge by her colleagues and treated disrespectfully. These behaviors created intense feelings of isolation having no one for support to during the transition process in such an unwelcoming environment. The participant discussed how much it impacted her confidence, created self-doubt, and made her job extremely challenging. The participant reported having to prove herself to colleagues continuously feeling exhausted and extreme stress. Another new leader study participant noted that the treatment from colleagues was not welcoming, so she had to self-organize like a "politician" to establish relationships with colleagues and stakeholder groups. Her colleagues made the processes difficult. Therefore, she had to work twice as hard to prove her credibility although she had an extensive background in the field with years of leadership experience.

The study's findings imply that new leaders deal with multiple crises simultaneously and often do not have resources available to help them perform their plans during their transition process, making

the transition process challenging. The data indicate new leaders are not provided with clear job expectations. There is no clear roadmap for them during the transition process, and in most cases, companies lack the infrastructure and processes needed to execute goals or objectives. New leaders have to learn on their own and often time dealing with busy supervisors and colleagues that are not always in a position to support them during the transition process. Furthermore, other than colleagues, supervisors, or team members being available to answer questions for a new leader, there is no formal support system designed for new leaders, such as executive coaches, mentors, formal training, and written processes to help the new leader get up to speed quickly. In some cases, new leaders have supervisors who are not the subject matter expert in the field. This creates extreme pressure for a new leader in making an immediate impact. Most importantly, new leaders are coming into company cultures that are not welcoming, which significantly impacts their confidence level. At the same time, they are dealing with toxic or dysfunctional work environments, or situations in which their company is being sold or going through financial crisis or the pandemic.

The study's findings imply that during the transition process, new leader participants also encounter various personal hurdles. They deal with family and mental health situations, such as leaving their previous toxic roles, dealing with the pandemic, and coming into new work environments where they are the "only" person of color, and dealing with confidence or insecurity concerns due to their lack of industry knowledge.

Theme 4: Challenges of being hired from the outside: The study's findings suggest that the most challenging part of being a new leader that is hired from outside into a new role and company involves multiple pieces. The new leader may not have the industry knowledge needed to make decisions as they encounter numerous issues concurrently during the transition process. There is a lack

of support systems to help the new leader get up speed rapidly to meet the company's demands or the situation at hand. The company's conditions significantly affect the new leaders' confidence and ability to perform effectively due to the unwelcoming or toxic environment. The company's internal systems, processes, and people are challenging to navigate, especially during the pandemic or completely working remotely.

Other obstacles faced by new leaders during the transition process are having to address and manage the compounding and numerous crises simultaneously. Furthermore, they are encountering many "new" aspects of the job and environment at the same time. Examples include dealing with the company culture, undefined job expectations, while trying to establish relationships and earning trust with stakeholders. In addition, they are dealing with the lack of infrastructure needed to execute their plans, dealing with complex industries, and personal transition items outside of work.

This study's findings confirm with the existing research that transitioning into a new leadership position from the outside is challenging and complicated, especially when every business is different. There is no best way to manage a transition process (Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999).

The study's findings hold that new leaders are left to sink or swim with minimal support after being hired (Watkins, 2013). While supervisors and colleagues play critical roles in supporting new leaders during the transition process, they are not always accessible or have the capacity and resources to assist during the transition process. In some cases, colleagues are the individuals creating the obstacles for new leaders and are the ones that are not helpful or

welcoming to them. Also, new leaders are often not provided with clear job expectations or have clear roadmaps of success during the transition process. They assume the expectations rather than being provided with them by the company.

The study's findings imply that companies do not have formal infrastructures or structured support systems available for new leaders at a director level during the transition process. Colleagues and supervisors connect and guide new leaders to the people and resources. However, not all of them have the required expertise to effectively support a new leader as they address challenges and face crisis and trying to meet all of the stakeholders' demands.

The study's findings suggest that new leaders do not always feel comfortable sharing the issues they encounter with supervisors. They are not comfortable being vulnerable during the early stages of the transition. As study participants described, supervisors and colleagues are “nice,” but they are not always helpful.

The study's findings imply a lack of support is available to help new leaders establish critical relationships during the transition process. This data aligns with the existing research that most organizations lack formal support structures (Gabarro, 1987; Manderscheid & Ardichvili, 2008.) Moreover, the transition process is rarely completed in one year, as noted in the existing research. Most new leader study participants indicated it took them between 5-6 months to begin feeling comfortable in their new role (Elsner & Farrands, 2006).

This study's findings reinforce the notion that new leaders are in a state of incompetence during the transition process when they have to make major decisions yet they know least about the company (Citrin & Neff, 2005). Most of the new leader study participants explained that they encountered

confidence and self-doubts concerns during the transition process. A few major factors that impacted their confidence involved switching industries, which created a lack of industry knowledge. The complexity of each of the different industries also created steep learning gaps for the new leaders during the transition process. These examples provided by study participants aligns with Gabarro (1987) comments, "It feels like you have no knowledge base whatsoever about anything at the same time, you are trying to learn."

The study's findings also noted that some of new leader participants discussed age impacted their confidence and ability to fit into the organization during the transition process. However, most participants expressed that it was the treatment of their colleagues, which contributed the most to their confidence level. In addition, some of the new leader study participants commented that their confidence was affected by their insecurity of wanting insiders' approval during the transition process. This, on top of having to hit the ground running for new leaders during the transition process, aligns with the existing research from Watkins and Ciampa (1999). The authors reported that the weakness of new leaders gets magnified during the transition process, causing them to have lower confidence during the transition period.

Conclusion

Overall, the study's findings reaffirm the existing research about the complexity of leadership transitions. Ciampa & Dotlich (2015) stated, "a leadership transition is not a simple transaction but rather a process that has many moving parts that exist through a string of interdependent steps."

The study's findings also concur with the lack of support available for new leaders during the transition process leaving them to sink or swim. While basic support is offered, such as orientations and

introduction meetings with colleagues and stakeholder groups, this study suggests a tailored structured support system for new leaders can be extremely valuable. Tailored support is vital since the transition process is complicated and highly messy. Without customized support for new leaders during the transition process, companies can jeopardize their chances of succeeding and unintentionally lead them to failure. As a result, companies must invest in designing a comprehensive transition process for new leaders to ensure they have the best chance for success with their transitions. As noted by Ciampa & Dotlich (2015), "Some research shows that a failed leader transition can cost 10 to 20 times the executive's yearly compensation."

As outlined in chapter two, existing studies provide a plethora of guidance and strategies for new leaders making transitions. Despite these recommendations, numerous circumstances complicate the transition process for new leaders that are hired from the outside, as outlined in this study. There is minimal support for new leaders, including specific onboarding and training plans. Moreover, when a new leader starts their job, they typically encounter multiple crises at the same time. They also face substantial organizational culture challenges as they try to get up to speed in the new organization. Some of those examples include:

- Transitioning into company cultures that are unwelcome
- Having to seek or hunt for information independently without clear support or directions in place
- Navigating the new leader's new role without clear expectations or roadmaps for success

While this study's findings suggest that the new leaders working with recruitment firms received executive or onboarding coaches for support during the transition process, companies usually do not provide that option. In addition, the colleague study participants emphasized their lack of awareness about their specific role to support a new leader. They did not fully understand their impact on a new leader during the transition process. In fact, most colleague study participants stated they could not fully

support their new leader due to their priorities and did not know how to help them. They also noted a lack of support was available to assist their new leaders during the transition process.

The study's findings bolster the need for organizations to re-evaluate their roles and responsibilities to help new leaders have the best chance for success during transitions. The results imply that a company's current role is recruiting and hiring the person into the company, but does not have a universal approach to ensure a new leader can succeed in their role. Once a new leader is hired, they are left on their own to figure out the culture and get up to speed independently without direction or support from the company. For that reason, companies should deliberately review their part in helping or hindering the new leader's ability to transition successfully.

Most new leader study participants indicated they were dealing with numerous crises simultaneously while facing many new facets of the role, company, and industry, which increased their pressure and stress during the transition process. Participants also said it took about five to six months for them to feel comfortable in their role and the company. These findings indicate that organizations should implement adequate support systems to foster a new leader's ability to thrive during the transition process.

The study's findings indicate that companies need to build more deliberate systems to efficiently help new leaders navigate their company internally and externally, including supporting the new leader bridge relationships to succeed in their roles. Therefore, having a robust system dedicated to supporting a new leader can increase their credibility and help close their learning gap more rapidly. This means, letting new leaders navigate and figure things out independently could delay their ability to create early wins and address the early demands of the company. Companies should develop clear roadmaps for success in the transition process with clear expectations for new leaders during their first 18-months. The roadmap could help new leaders prioritize their time, resources, plans, people, and learning plan

much more effectively during the transition as they get up to speed and create early wins in the new position.

The study's findings bolster the need to conduct more research to understand an organization's role. As the data are shown in this study, most of the colleague study participants had never thought about their direct impact or position in a new leader's transition process. Most of them were not always equipped to support their new leaders due to their capacity or were unaware of what things would be helpful to support their new leader during the transition process. Many of them assumed supervisors were primarily responsible for supporting the new leader, and described they did not fully understand how their organization facilitated the transition process for new leaders even though they acknowledged their new leader were dealing with numerous challenges during the transition process.

Implications for Improved Practices

The study's findings concur with the existing research that for the best chance for new leaders to make successful transitions, organizations must do its part by paying careful attention to the overall leadership transition process details, according to researchers (Watkins, 2013; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Before a new leader is hired, organizations need to assess the necessary capabilities, skills, and abilities. A new leader's charters must be explicit and transparent with clear priorities (Gabarro, 1987; Gilmore, 1988; Ciampa & Watkins, 1999; Citrin & Neff, 2005; Elsner & Farrands, 2006; Watkins, 2013; Ciampa & Dotlich, 2015). Organizations must identify and do as much as possible to anticipate the problems new leaders will likely encounter during transitions and remove barriers as much as possible. Gabarro (1987) noted that appropriate resources and support should be provided to new leaders. The author claims that external support and resources may accelerate learning for the new leader in some situations.

Watkins (2013) also reported that support should match the leader's level, such as a transition coach versus cohort sessions versus virtual works and self-guided materials (p.251).

This study's findings have offered relevant insights to answer the researcher's question, "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside? The results suggest that an organization's role is essentially recruiting and hiring the new leader but not necessarily ensuring the person successfully makes the transition. The findings imply that organizations lack a universal approach to support a new leader during the transition process. Moreover, organizations have not taken the necessary steps recommended by the existing research to help their new leaders transition.

Based on this study's findings, if organizations do not invest in a new leader's transition process for their company, they will likely produce the same results where a high percentage of new leaders that are hired from the outside leave or fail within 18-months. For this reason, this study's findings insinuate that an organization's role should not only be to recruit and hire a new leader but to propel them during the transition process by investing in building comprehensive transition programs to support new leaders. The section below will include suggestions for companies to build comprehensive transition programs for new leaders that are hired from the outside based on this study's findings.

Building Comprehensive Transition Programs:

To increase the chances of successful transitions for new leaders hired from the outside, organizations must have an **attitude and mindset** of wanting the person to succeed by **expanding their role** from solely recruiting and hiring a new leader to **propelling** them towards success during the person's first two years. Organizations **must invest funding, people, resources, and time** to provide a **comprehensive transition program** for a new leader in three critical areas: planning and recruiting, hiring, and propelling the new leader with **structured support systems for at least the first 24 months**.

A company can explore the questions and actions suggested below to develop their comprehensive transition program for new leaders.

Questions and actions during the planning and recruiting processes:

- Define the purpose of the position and name how the position will fit into the current organization's and team's structure. In addition, determine the position's responsibilities and communicate them across the organization, especially to key stakeholder groups impacted internally and externally before an individual is hired.
- Clearly define and name the expectations for the leadership position and identify what success will entail and how the person's progress will be measured during the first 24 months. Questions could include-What will be required for the new leader to learn and achieve in their first 3-months? 6-months? 1-year? 15-months? 18-months? 24 months? What measurements will be used to determine the person's progress and how will those things be tracked and by whom?
- Identify and name which insider and outsider stakeholder groups will be most impacted by the leadership role and involve them in co-creating the transition plan to gain buy-in early from insiders during the transition process. This inclusive process could help insiders avoid feeling competition or duplication of work by the new leader.
- Anticipate and name the key challenges the leadership role could encounter and invest in adequate wrap-around support based on the company's situation, needs and expectations for the position for up to 24 months. The company's evaluation should include challenges within the company's or team's infrastructure, processes, systems, capacity, people, culture, and climate, and the condition of the organization. This will ensure a new leader can expedite their learning and build sound strategies to achieve their goals and meet the challenging demands faced by new leaders. The company can also use Michael Watkin's STARS framework mentioned in chapter

two to identify critical challenges the person will face from the external conditions of their industry or other circumstances.

- Identify and name what competencies and industry knowledge will be needed for the leadership position during the transition process and design a learning plan with relevant support to expedite the person's ability to create early wins and to make immediate impact. This will avoid having the person figure things independently and effectively accelerate their ability to make decisions during the transition process.
- Identify and name which relationships will be most critical for the leadership role and create support plans to bridge and help the new leader to navigate those relationships. This will help the individual establish social capital and networks with key stakeholders to build their credibility during the transition process. Moreover, the relationships can help increase the new leader's confidence and develop alliances for support. The process can also help the new leader navigate the different personalities and complex systems which often delays their ability to create early wins during the transition process.
- Identify and name which stakeholders inside and outside the company will be accountable to support the new leader and clarify their specific roles during the transition process. These individuals should be formed into a transition team or advisory group to guide, mentor, sponsor, and help the new leader succeed in their first two years. Each role's responsibilities should be a part of their performance evaluation or paid for their work through an incentive plan. The process should entail identifying the supervisor's role in the transition process, including the HR, colleagues, direct reports, etc. More importantly, the company should provide relevant training, including offering "just-in-time" training for the transition team to effectively support the new leader and coordinate their resources and talents. The transition team could help the new leader

diagnose their situation, develop strategies and priorities, and navigate the culture and industry. The transition team could include HR, colleagues, an outside consultant or transition coach, mentor, customer or client, industry expert, team member, and a senior leader who sponsors the transition team's objectives during the transition process. In addition, the company could create formal positions such as a director of transition success or a role that oversees the company's overall transition plans for all new leaders and provide just-in-time training as needed. The full-time person could be the primary person to actively monitor progress by working closely with the new leader's supervisor and HR during the transition process. The transition team or full-time position is critical to increasing a new leader's chances of success during the transition process since they face multiple crises and have to take in so much information learn and navigate the new environment.

- Identify and name which players should be a part of the hiring process. This study suggests that the transition team or insiders impacted by the leadership position should be included as interview panelists during the recruiting and hiring processes. Their involvement would be vital since they will also be responsible for helping the new leader that is hired during the transition process.
- Before the actual recruiting process, the company should build structured support systems tailored for the new leader based on their situation and goals. The company should:
 - Implement appropriate onboarding and training plans to expedite access to information efficiently and to close the learning gap for the new leader.
 - Incorporate mentors, coaches, networks, leadership programs, or a buddy system for the new leader to support their learning plan.
 - Have written and documented learning plans outlined for a new leader.

- Furthermore, the company should conduct an internal assessment of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to implement sufficient support for its new leader. The evaluation results from those two things could help the new leader hit the ground running much quicker by knowing its actual capacity for change. The STARS framework and SWOT analysis could also inform the type of leader a company desires to hire for its leadership position. The results could help the company design support systems based on their strengths and opportunities to match their needs.

Questions and Actions to consider for the hiring processes:

- During the hiring process, consider which players should be involved in the interviewing process and why. What will be each of the person's role in the transition process. In addition, how will each person be involved with the new leader after they are hired.
- Once the company decides to work with an external recruitment firm to hire the leadership position, ensure the recruitment can also provide training and relevant information for insiders to support the new leaders.

Questions and Actions to consider in propelling the new leader:

- The company should create a welcoming and inclusive environment for the new leader to ensure they can easily fit into the organization and feel a sense of belonging. As indicated earlier, before hiring a new leader, the company must consider how the person can navigate their culture and build adequate support for them. This should entail offering training for all stakeholders and communicating the new leader's role, responsibilities, expectations, and ways stakeholders can effectively support the person during the transition process. Furthermore, as noted in this study's findings, the new leader study participants desired insiders' approval and put tremendous efforts

to fit in for people's approval. However, many of them commented that their confidence was impacted by how insiders treated them.

- The company should implement structured support systems with appropriate onboarding and training plans for the new leaders for 24 months. This should include support that are specific for leaders of color and women who encounter addition challenges on top of the normally challenges with transitions such as dealing with being an only, dealing with micro-aggressions, racism, conflict management, identify and leadership, imposter syndrome, etc.
- Based on a company's situation and the new leader's experiences and background, the company should provide an extra pair of hand to support its new leader during the early stages of the transition process to get the individual up to speed more rapidly. The "extra-pair" of hand would allow sufficient time for a new leader to thoroughly assess their team's condition, strengths, weaknesses, and capacity. The help will also allow a new leader to properly prepare for the new job since new leaders do not have lengthy time between their old and new one. The help can give a new leader time to establish relationships. It could entail having overlapping time between the old leader and the company's new one for at least three months. That time can give the new leader sufficient space and time to wrap their arms around their new company and time to address crises without flying by the seat of their pants.
- The company should ensure the new leader's supervisors and the board members are accessible during the transition process for a new leader. The company should build proximity between the new leader and managers to cultivate trusting and strong relationships. HR could also create regular check-in processes with both parties to ensure enough support is provided for each person during the transition process.

While the suggestions listed above are not exhaustive and may not be the perfect solution for every leadership transition situation, they are a good starting point for companies to build a comprehensive transition program to propel new leaders that are hired from the outside. As noted earlier, it is not enough for a company to recruit and hire a new leader. They need to build proper structured support systems with sound onboarding, training and offer customized support to ensure the new leader can have the best chance for success with their transition in their new leadership position and the new company.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study provided important insights into an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals that are hired from the outside. Nevertheless, due to the small sample size of participants in this study, the study's findings cannot be generalized to all leadership transition scenarios since leadership transitions are complex. This study was limited with a small sample size of 28 interviews with new leaders and colleague participants. However, the study did not include other crucial roles typically involved in a new leader's transition process, such as HR, recruitment firms, and executive coaches, as noted by the new leader study participants. If those important roles were added to this study, it would have provided richer data and a more holistic view of the organization's role. Additionally, interviewing other roles such as the hiring managers, interviewing panelists, recruitment firms, executive coaches, team members, colleagues, board members, and outside stakeholders would be valuable to understand how companies facilitate the transition process for new leaders.

This study used interviewing as the primary method, but other methods such as focus groups and reviewing specific transition and training materials provided to new leaders from companies would have been useful. The methods could gathered more knowledge about the organization's role and identified

appropriate interventions to decrease the percentage of new leaders leaving or failing during the transition process within the first 18 months.

Another limitation of this study was conducting interviews virtually and over phone calls due to the pandemic with study participants by the researcher. Unfortunately, the virtual setting did not allow the researcher to see participants' body language during the interviews. The ability to observe study participants' body language could have cued the researcher to ask different questions during the interview sessions, which could have added richer data to the study to understand an organization's role in a new leader's transition process.

The pandemic also added many challenges that new leader and colleague study participants were dealing with at the time of the interview with the researcher. Therefore, the researcher wanted to be respectful of their circumstances and did not want to intrude on the participants' time with more follow-up questions, which could add more information to this study.

Since this study focused on interviewing leaders from the outside, it would have been helpful to also speak with new leaders promoted internally or leaders that transitioned from the outside who are successful after their two-year mark. Examining their experience and determining if there are similar themes between those populations would be valuable to understanding an organization's role and enhanced the researcher's findings for a more holistic view of the transition process.

Recommendations for Future Research

As noted in the first three chapters, minimal research is available to understand an organization's role in a new leader's transition process and how a company facilitates the transition process. According to Ciampa and Dotlich (2015), leadership transitions are complex, and too many fail, and can significantly impact the company and derail individuals' careers. They commented, "even though

companies state they want new leaders to succeed, they lack a working model of support, feedback, openness, and continuous improvement necessary for those new in a top position to succeed."

This study has begun understanding an organization's role for new leaders that are director levels. However, further research is needed to understand an organization's role comprehensively. Below are suggestions for future research to increase the understanding of an organization's role in a new leader's transition process.

Further research is needed to understand how a company prepares and plans for a new leader's arrival. More information is required to understand who is involved in the planning and preparation processes when a company hires a new leader, and how does the company make decisions about its support systems for new leaders. How does the company see its role, and which stakeholders are engaged and involved in a new leader's transition process?

Further research is needed to understand the primary reasons a new leader leaves or fails during the 18 months and how are companies are addressing those situations. More data is needed to understand how companies currently address the issues and what strategies are working to help their new leaders make successful transitions in the 18-months. These data would be remarkably valuable to help build transition plans for new leaders to increase their chances of success during the transition process.

Further research is needed to examine the differences between women's and men's leadership experiences and what support might be more helpful for each population. In addition, more research is needed to understand the experiences of leaders of color and how companies support them during the transition process. These research's data could help companies develop inclusive and welcoming transition plans and support for the new leaders during the transition process.

Overall, more research is needed to adequately understand an organization's role in a new leader's transition process to increase their chances of success in making the transition. It is not enough for a company to solely recruit and hire a new leader, but propelling them as part of the transition process will be vitally important since the cost of failure is significant for the company and can impact and derail the person's career.

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Appendix A-Interview Guide for New Leader Study Participants

Dissertation Title: "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

Interview Questions:

1. What was your career path into the leadership position?
 - a. How did you first learn about the position?
 - b. What specifically made you interested in the position and the organization?
 - c. Was the new position similar to what you were doing previously in your role, or is it different? How so?
 - d. Are you still employed by the organization today? If yes, what is keeping you there? If no, what made you leave?
 - e. If you were employed, what was your experience like leaving your previous position, and what impact, if any, did that have on your transition to your new position?
2. Once you were offered the position:
 - a. What was your experience transitioning into your new role and the new organization?
 - b. What specific actions did you take to prepare for your new position and what was that process like?
 - c. What were your strategies for making the transition?
 - d. How did you learn what was expected of you in your new position?
 - e. What support was provided to you by the organization, and who supported you in the transition process?
 - f. Who did you rely on during the transition process, and for what?
 - g. Whom did you report to in the organization and what was that experience like during your transition?
 - h. What was the condition of the organization when you transitioned into your new position?
 - i. What was the condition of the team you had to manage?
 - j. What did you experience with your team as you transitioned into your new position? With your peers? With your supervisor? With Human Resources?
3. What was your organization's role in your transition process?
 - a. What did your transition process entail?
 - b. How did the organization welcomed and prepared you for your new position?
 - c. How did your organization facilitate the transition process for you?
 - d. Who was involved in your transition, and what was their role?
 - e. What type of materials or things were available for you and provided to help with transition process?
 - f. What training and support were available and provided for you?
 - g. Were you offered a coach or mentor when you transitioned into your new position?
4. Looking back at your transition process:
 - a. How long did it take for you to feel successful in your new position? How did you know you were successful? If you were not successful, why or why not?
 - b. Is there anything you would do differently reflecting on your transition process?
 - c. Is there anything your organization could have done differently for your transition?

- d. What things did you find most helpful in making the transition, and why were those things helpful for you?
- e. What was most helpful to you about the way your organization facilitated the transition process, and why?
- f. Who from the organization impacted your transition and how did they impact your experience?
- g. What did you find most challenging about transitioning into the new position and your organization, and how did you address the challenges?
- h. How did your transition impact your life outside of work? Did you share that information with anyone in the organization? If yes, why? If no, why?
- i. What was the most challenging part of your transition into a new position with a new organization?

Appendix B-Interview Guide for New Leader's Colleague Study Participants

Dissertation Title: "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

Interview Questions:

1. What is your role within X company?
2. How long have you been with X company?
3. What is your professional relationship with (new leader's name)?
4. How did/do you work with (new leader's name)?
5. What was your role in the (new leader's name) transition process?
6. Can you describe in detail how the transition process was facilitated for (new leader's name)?
 - o What did the process involve and who was involved in the process?
 - o What was your role in that process?
7. What things did/do you feel were most helpful for the (new leader's name) in making the transition to his/her new position within this organization?
8. Is there anything you feel could have been different about how your organization facilitated the transition process for (new leader's name) and why?
9. What was your experience with (new leader's name)?
10. What did/do you feel made (new leader's name) successful or not successful in making the transition into their new position within this company?
11. What did/do you think was challenging for (new leader's name), and how was that addressed?

Appendix C-Email to Network Regarding Study

Dear Name:

My name is May Thao-Schuck, and I am a doctoral student in Organization Development at St. Thomas University. I am the principal researcher in a qualitative grounded theory study to examine an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired outside into senior leadership positions. I am interested in exploring, documenting, and analyzing an organization's role in a new leader's transition process. The study's findings could contribute more information to the field of leadership and the current literature on leadership transition. Furthermore, the study can provide additional insights for organizations to support new leaders more effectively during the transition process.

I am contacting you to see if you would be interested in hearing more about my study or aware of any individual that may fit the criteria below to be a study participant for the research. The criteria to be a study participant include:

- A. An individual hired into a new organization in a senior leadership role at a director level or higher.
- B. At the interview time with the researcher, the individual can be employed or no longer with the same organization.

The study participant would take part in an 45-60 minutes interview with me either:

- By phone
- Virtually-using a computer platform such as Zoom or Google hangouts

Please let me know by replying to this email or by phone if you would like to learn more about the study or know someone that could be a good fit for the study. Either way, your feedback would mean a lot to me, and I appreciate your assistance. My email is Thao0051@stthomas.edu, and the phone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Best Regards,

May Thao-Schuck

Appendix D-Informing the Participant with Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Dissertation Title: "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

Principal Researcher: May Thao-Schuck

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study.

Purpose:

This study is educational research using a qualitative grounded theory methodology. The purpose of the study is to investigate an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. As a participant, you will receive predetermined questions by the principal researcher during an on-site computer platform system such as zoom or Google hangouts or phone interview.

To ensure the accuracy of the information, the interview session will be audio-recorded, which can be stopped and/or not used in the research at the verbal or written request of the participant. As a result, do I have your permission to audio record the interview for this qualitative study?

Risks and Benefits: This study poses risks to study participants by potentially identifying the participant due to the number of small participants interviewed for this study. The participant may also encounter emotionally distressed by recalling or sharing their leadership transition experience. This research's benefits include the contribution of knowledge to the field of leadership related to leadership transitions. Furthermore, the knowledge gained can help organizations that hire new leaders from the outside to consider the best way to support new leaders to have the best chance for success.

Voluntary Participation/Rights to Withdraw: Participation in this study is voluntary. The participant is free to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences or penalties. There are no payments for participation.

Confidentiality: Only the principal researcher will know the identity of the participants. All participants will be given code names to ensure confidentiality. Any materials submitted to the principal researcher by the participants will remain confidential. All information and materials associated with this research study will be kept in a locked file cabinet by the principal researcher. Federal, local, and institutional laws about confidentiality will not be violated.

Attached is a copy of the Institutional Review Board's Informed Consent form with this email. Once you review the form, please add your signature and date and return it to me by email at Thao0051@stthomas.edu. I am grateful for your participation and time.

The following questions will serve as a guide to the collection of data for the study. Additional questions may be asked, depending on the responses given to the listed questions. Depending on time, all of the questions may not be asked or if the participant does not feel comfortable answering any of the questions.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

- What was your career path into the leadership position?
- How did you first learn about the position?
- What specifically made you interested in the position and the organization?
- Was the new position similar to what you were doing previously in your role, or was it different? How so?
- Are you still employed by the organization today?
- If yes, what is keeping you there? If no, what made you leave?
- If you were employed, what was your experience leaving your previous position, and what impact, if any, did that have on your transition to the new position?

Once you were offered the position:

- What were your experience transitioning into your new role and the new organization?
- What specific actions did you take to prepare for your new position?
- What were your strategies for making the transition?
- How did you learn what was expected of you in your new position?
- What support was provided to you by the organization, and who supported you in the transition process?
- Who did you rely on in your transition process, and for what?
- Whom did you report to in the organization?
- What was the condition of the organization when you transitioned into your new position?
- What was the condition of the team you had to manage?
- What did you experience with your team? With your peers? With your supervisor? With Human Resources?
- What was your organization's role in your transition process?
- What did your transition process entail?
- How did the organization welcome and prepare you for your new position?
- How did your organization facilitate the transition process for you?
- Who was involved in your transition, and what was their role?
- What type of materials was available and provided to help you make a transition successful?
- What training and support were available and provided to you?
- Were you offered a coach or mentor when you transitioned into your new position?
- Looking back at your transition process:
 - How long did it take for you to feel successful in your new position? How did you know you were successful? If you were not successful, why and why not?
 - Is there anything you would do differently?
 - Is there anything your organization could have done differently for your transition?
 - What things did you find most helpful in making the transition, and why were those things helpful for you?

- What was most helpful to you about the way your organization facilitated the transition process, and why?
- What did you find most challenging about transitioning into the new position and your organization, and how did you address the challenges?
- How did your transition impact your life outside of work? Did you share that information with anyone in the organization? If yes, why? If no, why?
- What was the most challenging part of your transition into a new position with a new organization?

Thank you for your time in advance and for your participation in this study. Your contributions are much appreciated. Also, an email of our conversation transcript will be sent for your review after our interview to ensure I have captured the accuracy of information.

Please let me know if you have any questions and feel free to contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Appendix E-Participant Request Letter

Dear XXXX,

My name is May Thao-Schuck, and I am a doctoral student in Organization Development at St. Thomas University. Your contact information was provided to me by XXXX, and XXXX mentioned that you are interested in learning more about my research.

I am the principal researcher in a qualitative grounded theory study to examine an organization's role in a new leader's transition process for individuals hired from the outside. I am interested in the study is to explore, document, and analyze an organization's role in a leadership transition process since over half of the individuals that transition into a new leadership position fails or leave within 18 months. The findings from the study would contribute information to the current literature on leadership transition and information for organizations to support new leaders in transitions.

I am reaching out to you and want to see if you are interested in participating in the study as a study participant. If the study is not something you can take part in at this time, is there anyone you feel may be a fit for me to speak with based on the criteria listed below to be a study participant for my research.

The criteria to be a study participant include:

1. The individual was hired into a new organization in a senior leadership role at a director level or higher within the last two years from today's date
2. At the time of the interview with the researcher, the individual can be employed or no longer with the same organization.

The study participant would take part in an interview with me either :

- Virtually by using a computer platform such as Zoom or Google hangouts
- By phone

I want to thank you in advance for your consideration to participate in this study. My goal is to conduct the interviews with study participants on XXX date and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

May Thao-Schuck

Appendix F-Inform Consent Form -Colleague Study Participants

Research Participation Key Information

"What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

What you will be asked to do:

- Participate in a virtual interview with the researcher to share your experience of the new leader's transition experience by responding to predetermined questions.
- Allow 45-60 minutes for the virtual interview with the researcher using Zoom or Google Hangouts or by phone.

Participating in this study has risks:

- You can potentially be identified even though your name is not reported or shared in the study.
- You may potentially encounter emotional distress having to recall your leadership transition experience.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

You are invited to participate in a research study about an organization's role in a leadership transition process for new leaders hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. The title of this study is "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside." You were selected as a possible participant and are eligible to participate in the study because you met the participant eligibility criteria.

The study's participant eligibility includes:

- The participant must be hired from the outside into a senior leadership position of director level or higher within the last two years from the date of this study.
- At the time of the interview, the participant's status can be employed or unemployed.
- The participant must nominate at least one colleague or someone who was aware of their leadership transition experiences, such as a supervisor, human resource, peer, or a board member involved in their transition process to be interviewed by the researcher.

The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether you would like to participate or not.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- Respond to the predetermined open-ended questions about your experience and knowledge of the new leader's transition experience in an interview.
- Allow me to schedule a virtual interview with you using a computer platform system such as Zoom or Google Hangouts or by phone.
- Allow 45-50 minutes for the interview with me.
- Determine if you will allow me to audio-record the interview. If the interview is audio-recorded, the recording can be stopped and/or not used at your verbal or written request.
- Review and edit the interview transcription when it is completed by me to ensure it is accurate.
- I plan to conduct at least 12 interviews with new leaders and 12 interviews with the new leader's colleagues or someone involved in their leadership transition process.

What are the risks of being in the study?

The study has risks:

- With a smaller number of participants interviewed for this study, a potential risk is that you may potentially be identified even though your name is not reported or shared in this study. Also, talking about your leadership transition experience may potentially create emotional distress for you.

Here is more information about why we are doing this study:

This study is being conducted by the doctoral student, May Thao-Schuck, from St. Thomas University within the Organizational Development Program. This study was reviewed for risks and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas.

This study aims to answer the research question of “What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?” As a result, the researcher is conducting a qualitative study using grounded theory to explore, document, and analyze the organization's role in a leadership transition process for individuals hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. The study's goal is to explore which players are involved in a new leader's transition process and their roles in the leader's transition process. The study's findings could contribute to the current literature on leadership transition and provide a theory further to advance organizations' support for new leaders in transitions.

The direct benefits you will receive for participating are:

- **There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, your contribution could add** more knowledge to the field of leadership related to leadership transitions. The knowledge could help organizations hire new leaders from the outside to consider the best way to effectively support their new leaders to have the best chance for success.

We believe your privacy and confidentiality is important. Here is how we will protect your personal information:

Your privacy will be protected while you participate in this study. You will determine the interview's timing and if the interview can be audio recorded, which can be stopped and/or not used at your verbal or written request.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any reports I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The types of records I will create include:

- Recordings of the interview, transcription of the interview, lists of information and themes gained from the interview, the researcher's journal and memo notes after the interview, and computer records. These records will be stored in the researcher's Microsoft OneDrive from St. Thomas University. In addition, the researcher's notes from the journaling and memos will be kept a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office.
- The individuals that will have access to the data are the researcher and dissertation advisor, Dr. Jamieson. This study will de-identify participants, and records collected during the study will be destroyed after three-years.

Though I will do everything I can to protect your confidentiality, State law and ethical standards require that I report any disclosure of the following to appropriate local or State authorities:

- Clear and imminent danger or harm to yourself or others, or
- Suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult.

We will keep information about you for future research about leadership transition. We will only use aggregate information and will not use any identifiers in future research. There is no limit to the length of time we will store de-identified information, but if you choose to withdraw from the study your information will not be stored for future use.

All signed consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years once the study is completed. Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas have the right to inspect all research records for researcher compliance purposes.

This study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the research with no penalties of any kind.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with any individuals, employers, cooperating agencies, or institutions or the University of St. Thomas. There are no penalties or consequences if you choose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will be destroyed unless it is already de-identified or published and I can no longer delete your data. You can withdraw by letting me know in person or by email or phone. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask during the interviewing process.

Incentives:

There are no payments associated for this study for participation.

Who you should contact if you have a question:

My name is May Thao-Schuck. You may ask any questions you have now and at any time during or after the research procedures. If you have questions before or after we meet, you may contact me at 651-235-1646 or Thao0051@stthomas.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Jamieson at jami1396@stthomas.edu or 612-7573373. Information about study participant rights is available online at <https://www.stthomas.edu/irb/policiesandprocedures/forstudyparticipants/>. You may also contact Sarah Muenster-Blakley with the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu with any questions or concerns reference project number 1651595-1.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I have had a conversation with the researcher about this study and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. I give permission to be audio recorded during this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix G-Inform Consent Form -New Leader Study Participants

Research Participation Key Information

"What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?"

What you will be asked to do:

- Participate in a virtual interview with the researcher to share your leadership transition experience by responding to pre-determined questions.
- Allow 45-60 minutes for the virtual interview with the researcher using Zoom or Google Hangouts or by phone.
- Nominate at least one colleague or someone involved in your leadership transition experience to interview by the researcher.

Participating in this study has risks:

- You can potentially be identified even though your name is not reported or shared in the study.
- You may potentially encounter emotional distress having to recall your leadership transition experience.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

You are invited to participate in a research study about an organization's role in a leadership transition process for new leaders hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. The title of this study is "What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside." You were selected as a possible participant and are eligible to participate in the study because you met the participant eligibility criteria.

The study's participant eligibility includes:

- The participant must be hired from the outside into a senior leadership position of director level or higher within the last two years from the date of this study.
- At the time of the interview, the participant's status can be employed or unemployed.
- The participant must nominate at least one colleague or someone who was aware of their leadership transition experiences, such as a supervisor, human resource, peer, or a board member involved in their transition process to be interviewed by the researcher.

The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether you would like to participate or not.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- Respond to the predetermined open-ended questions by me about your leadership transition experience in an interview.
- Allow me to schedule a virtual interview with you using a computer platform system such as Zoom or Google Hangouts or by phone.
- Allow 45-50 minutes for the interview with me.
- Determine if you will allow me to audio-record the interview. If the interview is audio-recorded, the recording can be stopped and/or not used at your verbal or written request.
- Nominate at least one colleague or someone who was aware of your leadership transition experiences, such as a supervisor, human resource, peer, or a board member involved in their transition process to be interviewed by the researcher.
- Review and edit the interview transcription when it is completed from me to ensure it is accurate.
- I am planning to conduct at least 12 interviews with new leaders along with 12 interviews with the new leader's colleagues or someone involved in their leadership transition process for this study.

What are the risks of being in the study?

The study has risks:

- With a smaller number of participants interviewed for this study, a potential risk is that you can potentially be identified even though your name is not reported or shared in this study. In addition, talking about your leadership transition experience may potentially create emotional distress for you.

Here is more information about why we are doing this study:

- This study is being conducted by the doctoral student, May Thao-Schuck from St. Thomas University within the Organizational Development Program. This study was reviewed for risks and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas.
- The purpose of this study is to answer the research question of “What is the organization's role in successfully transitioning new leaders hired from the outside?” As a result, the researcher is conducting a qualitative study using grounded theory to explore, document, and analyze the organization's role in a leadership transition process for individuals hired from the outside into senior leadership roles. The goal of the study is to explore which players are involved in a new leader's transition process and their roles in the leader's transition process. The study's findings could contribute to the current literature on leadership transition and provide a theory further to advance organizations support for new leaders in transitions.
- The direct benefits you will receive for participating are:
- **There are no direct benefits for participating in this study. However, your contribution could add more knowledge to the field of leadership related to leadership transitions.** The knowledge could help organizations that hire new leaders from the outside to consider the best way to effectively support their new leaders to have the best chance for success.

We believe your privacy and confidentiality is important. Here is how we will protect your personal information:

Your privacy will be protected while you participate in this study. You will determine the timing of the interview and if the interview can be audio recorded which can be stopped and/or not used at your verbal or written request.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any reports I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The types of records I will create include:

- Recordings of the interview, transcription of the interview, lists of information and themes gained from the interview, the researcher's journal and memo notes after the interview, and computer records. These records will be stored in the researcher's Microsoft OneDrive from St. Thomas University. In addition, the researcher's notes from the journaling and memos will be kept a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office.
- The individuals that will have access to the data is the researcher and the researcher's dissertation advisor, Dr. Jamieson. This study will de-identify participants and records collected during the study will be destroyed per IRB's recommendation of three years.

Though I will do everything I can to protect your confidentiality, State law and ethical standards require that I report any disclosure of the following to appropriate local or State authorities:

- Clear and imminent danger or harm to yourself or others, or
- Suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult.

We will keep information about you for future research about leadership transition. We will only use aggregate information and will not use any identifiers in future research. There is no limit to the length of time we will store de-identified information, but if you choose to withdraw from the study your information will not be stored for future use.

All signed consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years once the study is completed. Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas have the right to inspect all research records for researcher compliance purposes.

This study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the research with no penalties of any kind.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with any individuals, employers, cooperating agencies, or institutions or the University of St. Thomas. There are no penalties or consequences if you choose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will be destroyed unless it is already de-identified or published and I can no longer delete your data. You can withdraw by letting me know in person or by email or phone. You are also free to skip any questions I may ask during the interviewing process.

Incentives:

There are no payments associated for this study for participation.

Who you should contact if you have a question:

My name is May Thao-Schuck. You may ask any questions you have now and at any time during or after the research procedures. If you have questions before or after we meet, you may contact me at 651-235-1646 or Thao0051@stthomas.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Jamieson at jami1396@stthomas.edu or 612-7573373. Information about study participant rights is available online at <https://www.stthomas.edu/irb/policiesandprocedures/forstudyparticipants/>. You may also contact Sarah Muenster-Blakley with the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu with any questions or concerns (reference project number 1651595-1).

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I have had a conversation with the researcher about this study and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. I give permission to be audio recorded during this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature of Study Participant**Date**

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher**Date**

Appendix H-Study Participation Verification Email/Letter

Dear (X)

Many thanks again for meeting with me on (XXX) to share your leadership transition experience insights. In the St. Thomas University's Institutional Review Board's Consent Form (previously emailed with the Interview Guide in XXXX), my study included a process for you to review the information I collected for the study to verify that the transcript is accurate. Therefore, I have attached the transcript of our conversation on (XXXX) for your review. Please feel free to edit and correct any errors within the transcript. Once your review is completed, please return the updated transcript copy to me by email on XXXX date. Your time is much valued, and I can't thank you enough for your support.

Per our discussion, the transcript's contents will be a part of the dissertation's aggregated data for the study, and quotes from the transcript may be used without revealing your identity. Each participant will be given a code name in my study for confidentiality, and your transcript will not be included in any of the appendices to the dissertation.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and feel free to reach me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or Thao0051@stthomas.edu

Sincerely,

May Thao-Schuck